Aristotle's Journey to Europe:
A Synthetic History of the Role Played by the Islamic Empire in the Transmission of Western Educational Philosophy Sources from the Fall of Rome through the Medieval Period

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Abstract

After the fall of Rome, how did the work and words of the ancient Greek philosophers make their way, textually and intellectually, into later European thought? There were two primary and obvious paths that this Greek literature could have taken to reach medieval Europe after the split of the Roman Empire into east and west sectors, but these two potential paths functionally became, instead, dual roadblocks to its transmission. In the western portion of the former Roman Empire, there was an overwhelming passive indifference to Greek philosophy coupled with a decline of culture generally in Western Europe during the so-called Dark Ages. In the eastern portion of the former Roman Empire, the attitude toward Greek philosophy was tempered by the imperial authority of Constantinople and eastern Christianity, and ranged from cautious acceptance to occasionally active censorship.

In response to the research question, here is my thesis: The Islamic Empire of the Middle Ages was the primary and indispensable force behind the preservation, transmission and acceptance of the Greek philosophical tradition to later European thinking. I will contend that without the influence of Muslim scholars during the medieval period, the foundational impact of Greek philosophy on later Western philosophy (including specifically, Western sources of educational philosophy) may have been greatly reduced (or potentially lost), used differently, and/or forced to find other sources of transmittal.

My research will pursue the historical connections between classical Greece and pre-Renaissance Europe on three interrelated levels—textual, philosophical, and cultural. First, I will examine the textual transmission of specific works by Plato and Aristotle, looking at the translation and transmission work done over time and through several language and cultural groups. Second, I will seek to find how the ideas of Plato and Aristotle were used and transmitted, moving from text to philosophical patterns of thinking. Third, I will look more broadly at the acceptance of philosophical inquiry and the development of critical thinking within culture itself, in Greek, Arabic, and Latin settings, to see how the often competing ideas of faith and reason play out over the course of our historical framework.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This research project begins with an important philosophical and educational assertion: We who claim lineage in the Western philosophical tradition have one common and indisputable foundation from which we view ourselves and our ideas, namely, that of the early Greek thinkers. Alfred North Whitehead, the noted twentieth-century philosopher, made the now famous comment, "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."[1] Certainly, Whitehead is not proposing that everyone in the West agrees with Plato's scheme of thought, or that we all are in some fashion idealists. But he does mean to say that Western philosophy and education are indebted to the ancient Greeks for their wealth of ideas and for their disciplined inquiry into these ideas, particularly Plato and his able student Aristotle. Charles Freeman restates Whitehead's basic thesis by asserting that, "the Greeks provided the chromosomes of Western civilization."[2] He goes on to state that "Greek ways of exploring the *cosmos*, defining the problems of knowledge . . . creating the language in which such problems are explored, representing the physical world and human society in the arts, defining the nature of value, describing the past, still underlie the

[1] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of Edinburgh During the Session 1927-28,* Corrected Edition ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 39.

[2] Charles Freeman, *The Greek Achievement: The Foundation of the Western World* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 435.

Western cultural tradition."[3] More to the point of this dissertation, Sheila Dunn observes, "It was during this early period . . . that Western educational thought and theory had its beginnings . . . Fundamental issues between these two Greek philosophers have continued to shape contemporary education throughout the centuries."[4] From this shared starting point of the ancient Greeks, Western thought, along with its most common mode of transmission—education—has evolved into the many modern philosophical branches that are known and studied today. Indeed, Bernard Williams clearly states, "the legacy of Greece to Western philosophy is Western philosophy."[5]

1.1 The Research Question

To simply state that the Greeks supply the cornerstone to Western thinking is certainly to state the obvious. So I will move on to state what is not obvious: The path that the early Greek writings and ideas took in finding their way into later European thought is far more complicated and far less direct than many sources on the history of philosophy describe. Carol Thomas makes a similar point when she states, "The extent of our debt to ancient Greece is clear, but specific links between past and present are more indistinct; the line of transmission has not been straight and single."[6]

[3] Ibid.

[4] Sheila Dunn, *Philosophical Foundations of Education: Connecting Philosophy to Theory and Practice* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. and Merrill/Prentice-Hall, 2005), 14.

[5] Bernard Williams, "Philosophy," in *The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal,* ed. M. I. Finley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 202.

[6] Carol G. Thomas, ed., *Paths from Ancient Greece* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988), 1.

To take for granted and without reflection that the philosophical giants, Plato and Aristotle (and Greek modes of thinking in general), are part of the West's intellectual background is to miss an important and equally fundamental part of our historical development. What I will attempt to show in this dissertation is that the transmission of the Greek philosophers to Western Europe happened in a rather haphazard way and that this transmission was aided by a most unlikely source, the Islamic Empire of the Middle Ages. What I want to do is objectively unpack the history of Western philosophy in such a way that those of us who depend on its foundation will understand how and why that foundation exists in the first place.

Here, then, is my research question: After the fall of Rome, how did the work and words of the ancient Greek philosophers make their way, textually and intellectually, into later European thought? The Roman Empire was the first post-Greek culture to inherit the wisdom of the Greek philosophers. But when the Roman Empire collapsed in the West due to the invasion of barbarian armies, the status of Greek philosophy was at the mercy of the Mediterranean basin's complex and chaotic next chapter in history. There were two primary and obvious paths that this Greek literature could have taken to reach medieval Europe after the split of the Roman Empire into east and west sectors, but these two potential paths functionally became, instead, dual roadblocks to its transmission. In the western portion of the former Roman Empire there was an overwhelming passive indifference to Greek philosophy coupled with a decline of culture generally in Western Europe during the so-called Dark Ages. Greek philosophy was, for all practical purposes, ignored and/or forgotten

in the West. In the eastern portion of the former Roman Empire, the attitude toward Greek philosophy was tempered by the imperial authority of Constantinople and eastern Christianity, and ranged from cautious acceptance to occasionally active censorship. More importantly, even though Greek thought survived in some form in the East, the Byzantine Empire (the name given to the later eastern portion of the Roman Empire) became increasingly isolated from Europe due to differences in theological and authority priorities while at the same time becoming more internally-tuned due to concerns over leadership and survival. Greek philosophy was, in effect, blocked from readily entering Europe from the East, even if the West had the intellectual desire for such stimulation at this time.

Many avenues of inquiry could be followed that would provide partial answers to this question. To keep a sense of manageability to this research plan, I will focus on one continuous thread in the tapestry of contending ideas that could be explored. Here is that guiding thread, in the form of a thesis statement that gives a potential answer to the research question stated above: The Islamic Empire of the Middle Ages was the primary and indispensable force behind the preservation, transmission and acceptance of the Greek philosophical tradition to later European thinking. I will contend that without the active influence of Muslim scholars during the medieval period, the foundational impact of the Greek philosophical triumvirate of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle on later Western philosophy (including specifically for purposes of this research, Western sources of educational philosophy) may have been greatly reduced (or potentially lost), used differently, and/or forced to find other

sources of transmittal. The role played by Islamic translators and scholars during the Middle Ages provided a central catalyst for not only the Aristotelian revolution of the twelfth century but for the Renaissance of the fourteenth-seventeenth centuries that concretely changed the direction of Europe and Western society.

This thesis presents a research-based re-understanding of the course of Western philosophy and education with important ramifications not only about how we in the West gained access to the Greek philosophical tradition but indeed about what the essence of that tradition is itself. This research will allow us to explore not only an interesting and often overlooked historical period but more importantly it will force us to reexamine what it means to be part of the Western intellectual schema. We will see that our so-called Western tradition takes an unexpected turn to the East. More than just manuscripts being preserved in a non-Western language (namely, Arabic) until Latin translators discovered them, the entire scope of Western educational philosophy moves through and is in some way transformed by Eastern culture, represented by the medieval Islamic Empire. If this research was solely confined to textual transmission, while being significant in its own right, the larger implications for Western thought might be minimized. My research will thus pursue the historical connections between classical Greece and pre-Renaissance Europe on three interrelated levels—textual, philosophical, and cultural. First, I will examine the textual transmission of specific works by Plato and Aristotle, looking objectively at the translation and transmission work done over time and through several language and cultural groups. Second, I will seek to find how the ideas of Plato and Aristotle

were used and transmitted, moving from text to philosophical patterns of thinking. We will see that Platonism and Aristotelianism exhibit a definable ebb and flow as first one then the other finds prominence in the Hellenistic and Early Medieval periods. Third, I will look more broadly at the acceptance of philosophical inquiry and the development of critical thinking within culture itself, in Greek, Arabic, and Latin settings, to see how the often competing ideas of faith and reason play out over the course of our historical framework. It is important to see the close connections between these three levels of inquiry, and, in my mind, their inseparability. For example, simply having access to a particular text from Aristotle does not necessarily imply an understanding of Aristotle's philosophical system nor an acceptance of philosophical inquiry in general. In fact, quite the opposite can be (and at times was) true.[7] So my investigation will be multi-tiered in order to tease out the true path of the Greek tradition rather than being satisfied with tracking manuscript libraries alone.

Here lies the most significant part of this dissertation—its topic and its rationale. The research question and its accompanying thesis are the heart and soul of this project. For while I hope to uncover pertinent research related to this question and thesis, the real strength of this and any scholarly work is to prod its readers to ponder for themselves the legitimacy and significance of the topic in and of itself; that there is indeed a legitimate question to be analyzed. If this dissertation takes the

[7] For example, we will see that the Byzantines held many of the Greek philosophical manuscripts but they always interpreted this classical tradition in ways that placed it in a subservient position to the theology of Christianity, thus making Byzantium a poor conduit through which Greek philosophy could make its way freely and holistically to Europe, even if communication opportunities between East and West were easily accessible, which they were not.

reader further down its specific paths of inquiry, that will of course be satisfactory and satisfying. However, more importantly, if the research question itself prompts the reader to entertain new and perhaps surprising ideas[8] and fresh approaches to old patterns of thought, then we will all have profited to a much larger degree by allowing ourselves to examine our Western historical and philosophical foundations and presuppositions with a fresh set of lenses. There is a presupposition among most Westerners that the Greek philosophical tradition has been naturally and uniquely bequeathed to them, and perhaps to them alone. However, as I have hinted at already and will demonstrate later, the direct connection between the early Greek thinkers and the later European Renaissance is not a simple connection and could legitimately be said to be an accident of history. Our Western minds take the Greek foundation as our rightful and necessary heritage when in fact its transmittal to the West was quite haphazard and involved historical players outside the Western purview who seldom are acknowledged as part of our intellectual heritage. If my research question allows our Western minds to step outside the deep ruts of conventional philosophical and educational history long enough to "connect the historical dots" between ancient Greece and medieval Europe and to see the important path these dots create, then the first and primary goal of this dissertation has been accomplished. Perhaps in the

[8] That surprise might be one result of following this particular line of research is corroborated by the work of Richard E. Rubenstein, who has done recent work on a parallel topic to my dissertation: *Aristotle's Children: How Christians, Muslims, and Jews Rediscovered Ancient Wisdom and Illuminated the Middle Ages* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc, 2003). The author provides the following narrative in his preface regarding the Aristotelian Revolution of the twelfth century: "The story itself was the first surprise. What most astonished me was how little known it was, considering its high level of dramatic interest and great historical importance. The Aristotelian Revolution transformed Western thinking and set our culture on a path of scientific inquiry that it has followed ever since the Middle Ages . . . One could hardly imagine a more pertinent story for modern readers, yet few people outside a small circle of academic specialists seemed to know anything about it. Ibid., ix-x.

process of allowing this question to play across our minds, we will be better prepared to more fully understand what the Western philosophical/educational tradition entails, adding a richness of diversity to our often monotone view of how Greek thinking became Western thinking.

Any history of the Middle Ages will note the impact, to a greater or lesser degree, of the Islamic Empire on Europe.[9] Many have discussed the connection between the Greek classics and their reintroduction into Western European culture and thinking. "As in science, so in philosophy, the Muslim and Jewish thinkers were the great bridge between antiquity and the 'Renaissance of the Twelfth Century' [in Europe]."[10] However, this connection seems to be understated and underappreciated in the general course of understanding Western development, especially in the arena of philosophy in general and philosophy of education specifically. In the course of this examination, I will argue that what is defined as Western Civilization has important philosophical cousins that have too long been ignored. On the other hand, while it will be easy to show a lack of appreciation for the influence of Islamic culture in the development of Western Europe, it is also possible to overestimate this influence. So then, in this dissertation, I will strive for balance, as reflected in this observation:

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[9] To a greater degree, see for example Montgomery W. Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* Islamic Studies 9 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1972); to a lesser degree, see for example, William Turner, "Arabian School of Philosophy," in the New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, copyrighted 2003 by K. Knight, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01674c.htm>, accessed July 10, 2006.

[10] Frederick B. Artz, *The Mind of the Middle Ages: An Historical Survey A.D. 200-1500,* 3rd ed., rev. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 163.

> It [Islam] would so critically shape medieval society from the eleventh century that one historian has even described Islam as the force in the "awakening" of Europe with "the prince, a speaker of Arabic, bestowing the kiss of delivery from centuries of deep sleep." We will not go so far, but there is no doubt that medieval Europe was much challenged and enriched by its Islamic neighbors. [11]

I will try to show that elements of the Middle Eastern mindset are not as far removed from the Western mindset as history and current events tend to characterize and that these two cultural centers have found common ground in centuries past.[12] Perhaps the very definition of what we call "Western" Civilization will have to be reexamined in light of the emerging historical roots and diverse background that will be highlighted in this study. To what exactly does the adjective, "Western" refer? A geographical location? A philosophical tradition? A cultural linkage? A shared mindset?

There is no desire or ability on my part to retell the entire story of Western philosophy—that has been done quite well by many others. But I do have a desire to uncover one of the roots of the Western mindset that has often only been partly understood and partially described. For, while the Greek philosophers were well entrenched and appreciated in the thinking of the early Hellenistic period and in the following period of the Roman Empire, after the fall of Rome in the fifth century we

[11] C. Warren Hollister and Judith M. Bennett, *Medieval Europe: A Short History,* 9th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 87.

[12] "Middle Eastern" thought could refer not only to Islam but to other religious/philosophical systems from this geographical region—systems such as Judaism, Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism. It is easily acknowledged that Judaism is directly linked, especially as it is tied to the foundations of Christianity, to Western thought, but this dissertation will concentrate on another of the Middle Eastern voices, Islam, not usually connected to Western development. Chapter 2 will further define connections that existed between West and East (Middle East) from ancient times.

begin to see a change in attitude toward the classical Greek thinkers and how philosophy was understood and taught. I will explore the path of the early Greek works during the time period known in Europe as the Dark Ages[13] or early Middle Ages. Here we will see that Plato and Aristotle were not always held in the high regard we find them today. The full use of these early philosophers by people of that time and the future transmission of their ideas to modern generations were, in a very real sense, in jeopardy during this period. This dissertation will endeavor to show how the Greek philosophical tradition was maintained and even expanded through these critical years, finally finding a safe haven in the medieval universities of Europe's Scholastic era, circa 1100–1500, from which the Western intellectual tradition rapidly expanded.[14]

1.2 The Interplay between Philosophy and Education

My dissertation ultimately centers on the history of education and how we have come to understand philosophy of education in Western thinking. But as the reader has already seen, I am quite freely using "philosophy" as the entry door into this discussion about education. What then is the relationship between the key elements of education and philosophy? They are clearly not identical but they certainly bear a close, overlapping relationship, one that I desire to make clear from

[13] This particular term is falling out of general use by scholars as this period of time has been reexamined in light of cultural and archeological discoveries. I will explain how historians generally define the "middle" epoch of European history later in the dissertation and will comment on why the phrase "the Dark Ages" is misleading.

[14] Appendix J shows in graphic form the direction and purpose of my dissertation.

the beginning. Because my research will often use the word "philosophy," it is important that the reader hears at least an echo of the word "education" whenever the word "philosophy" is used.

An appropriate beginning point for this kind of connection, and a mandatory discussion before I move further with the research question, must proceed from a careful definition of what I mean by the word "education." For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use a definition that is quite broad. The work of historian Lawrence Cremin is a natural source to investigate a broad definition of education, and to his widely recognized description I now turn:

> I have conceived of education in this essay as the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, and any learning that results from the effort, direct or indirect, intended or unintended. This definition obviously projects inquiry beyond the schools and colleges to a host of individuals and institutions that educate—parents, peers, siblings, and friends, as well as families, churches, synagogues, libraries, museums, settlement houses, and factories. And it clearly focuses attention on the relationships among the several educative institutions and on the effects of one institution's efforts on those of another. What is needed most for a sound historical understanding of these relationships—or linkages, as I have called them here—is a variety of investigations that study them in their own right, with explicit educational questions uppermost in mind.[15]

Although Cremin's definition of education was created in the context of his study of early American education specifically, his classification of educational relationships has been and will be applied here to education generally. His definition reminds us that education has connections that go far beyond formal schooling and

[15] Lawrence Cremin, "Family-Community Linkages in American Education: Some Comments on the Recent Historiography," in *Families and Communities as Educators*, ed. Hope Leichter (New York: Teachers College Press, 1978), 567, first published in *Teachers College Record* 76 (December 1974): 250-265.

even beyond intentional learning. Cremin emphasizes that education must be defined latitudinally, that is, education encompasses the breath of human society's structures and relationships. It is these lateral linkages, studied "in their own light, with explicit educational questions uppermost in mind," that I will endeavor to analyze as I review the path that Western foundational philosophers took to arrive in Europe and become the building blocks of Western thought.

While Cremin casts the education net widely, he is hesitant to equate it simply with the transfer of culture generally. "It [Cremin's own definition of education] sees education as a process more limited than what the sociologist would call socialization or the anthropologist enculturation, though obviously inclusive of many of the same phenomena."[16] But he is not far from another highly regarded American historian's definition of education: "The entire process by which culture transmits itself across the generations."[17] Bernard Bailyn's definition helps us build from Cremin's work in two ways. First, we see clearly that education and culture are closely linked; agency (education) and content (culture) are mutually dependent on each other. Second, Bailyn's definition of education is not limited to activity contemporaneous with a

[16] Lawrence Cremin, *Public Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 27.

[17] Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 14. That Cremin is in basic agreement with Bailyn's view is seen in Cremin's own review of John Dewey's work. "The most notable distinction between living beings and inanimate things, he tells us [Dewey in *Democracy and Education*], is that living beings maintain themselves by renewal. Among human beings, that renewal takes place through a process of cultural transmission, which Dewey refers to as 'education in its broadest sense.' Education in its broadest sense is a process that is continuous, ubiquitous, pervasive, and all-powerful—indeed, so powerful that Dewey draws the moral that the only way in which adults can consciously control the kind of education children get is by controlling the environment in which they act, think, and feel." Cremin goes on to note Dewey's perception of a wider definition of education but chides him for his lack of linking it in practical terms to non-school events, perhaps artificially creating a dualism between school and society, something Dewey himself would vigorously oppose. Lawrence Cremin, "Public Education and the Education of the Public," *Teachers College Record* 77 (1975): 1-12.

stated observer but assumes continuity and influence "across the generations." Here the definition of education takes on another dimension, one that significantly clarifies Cremin's position. While Cremin emphasizes a latitudinal (or breadth) view of educational sources and activities, Bailyn emphasizes the longitudinal (or depth) dimension by bringing in the historical aspect of educational transmission. Another American historian, Ray Hiner, offers his definition of education, a derivative of Cremin's and Bailyn's, succinctly reinforcing both the needed educational dimensions I have just highlighted: "The entire process by which humans develop a sense of self, formulate their identities, learn the ways of their society so they can function within it, and transmit their culture from generation to generation."[18] According to Hiner, this kind of definition is mandatory for current and coherent educational research. "We need to . . . develop an epistemologically comprehensive definition of education if we hope to exploit the great potential of the history of education to contribute to human understanding."[19]

With these definitions in mind, it is clear that education is, at its heart, a historical endeavor. Education proceeds through time as families, agencies, and societies pass on to the next generation its skills, ideas and values. An understanding of these "linkages," as Cremin calls them, both historical and present, is essential to a study of educational foundations and to my particular investigation into Western education. Understanding the fact that education is a broadly conceived topic with a

[18] N. Ray Hiner, "History of Education for the 1990s and Beyond," *History of Education Quarterly* 30/2 (Summer 1990): 149.

[19] Ibid., 146.

multiplicity of linkages—some obvious, many others not—will help legitimize the wide scope of the present project and will present the reader with a common and coherent beginning and ending point for my analysis—namely, that this analysis begins and ends with a focus on education in the Western tradition. While this project will stray at times from direct educational commentary, these definition anchor points will provide the necessary boundary lines for this investigation.

In light of the foregoing broad definitions of education, when I talk about philosophy, I will also be talking in some way about education. Here, finally, is my own working definition of education that I will use for this dissertation: Education includes (but is not encompassed by)[20] the process of transmitting a group's worldview latitudinally to its constituents and others outside the group over which there is influence and longitudinally to succeeding generations from preceding generations. "Worldview" refers simply to the three key questions of philosophical inquiry: What is real? (Metaphysics), How do we know? (Epistemology), What do we value? (Axiology). A worldview can ask questions beyond these three, but it must ask at least these three. Wrapped up in these questions, we see that philosophy is actually composed of two related elements. Philosophy is both activity and a body of content, both a set of "thinking tools" and an accepted set of presuppositions and

[20] Education certainly does more than transmit a group's worldview; collected data and information about the world and perfected hands-on skills provide the basic material of educational curricula. But in a real way, both information and skills are subsets of a worldview and of the priorities presented within that worldview. See my discussion later on Eisner's definition of normative education.

conclusions.[21] Education is the agent for transmitting a group's worldview, or philosophical tools and content, to that group's sphere of influence.

It is interesting that most philosophy of education textbooks examine a variety of individuals who were, in their respective lifetimes, both philosophers and educators. However, many personalities studied in the course of philosophy of education would likely be considered primarily philosophers and secondarily as educators, if we were forced to label them. The following names come easily to mind and many more could be added: Plato and Aristotle, Aquinas, Locke, Descartes, Calvin, Kant, Dewey, Rorty. These people were all philosophers and to a greater or lesser degree also wrote about how their philosophy impacted the educational realm. Dunn would go so far as to say, "With rare exceptions a philosophy of education is by no means built into the philosophical positions of Western thinkers . . . Nonetheless, thoughts that are applicable to . . . education can be found with relative ease in the works of Western philosophers."[22] That is why a philosophy of education course cannot help but be a course in philosophy itself to some extent; the two subjects—education and philosophy—heavily overlap each other. If we describe . . .

> . . . education as a deliberate process that has a desired goal . . . then educators must have some basis for arriving at a conception of that goal. Concern with a goal presupposes a world view or a philosophical viewpoint that involves a set of beliefs in the nature of reality, the essence of truth, and a basis for forming values . . . concepts of reality, truth, and value are the "stuff" of philosophy.

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[21] See Morris Van Cleve, *Philosophy and the American School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), 221. Actually Morris states three elements—activity, values and content. I have condensed the last two terms into one.

[22] Dunn, *Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 14.

> Philosophy, therefore, is a basic constituent in the foundation of educational practice.[23]

If my definition of education holds any weight, then we can see philosophy as the intellectual tools and content a society claims as valid and valuable, and education as the means of transmitting these tools and content. This is where the topic of philosophy of education and the individual categories of philosophy and education can get quite muddied and understandably so. For when we ask, for example, "What is the 'end' of education?" we must also ask, "What is the 'end' of human endeavor and speculation?" Mary-Lou Breitborde and Louise Swiniarski clearly observe: "We believe that before educators can fashion a picture of the ideally educated person, they must first examine their fundamental beliefs about reality, truth, value, power, and authority. Once educators formulate these beliefs, they can make school and classroom decisions that are coherent."[24] Leonard Waks restates my premise in the form of four key questions: "1. How does this field [philosophy of education] relate to the parent discipline, philosophy? 2. How does it relate to educational policy and the direction of educational practice? 3. How does it relate to the concerns of the 'educated person in rapidly changing contemporary society'? 4. Is there any value in narrowly intellectual work in this field, or must it all be 'relevant'?"[25] Waks goes on to remind us that "philosophical thinking is not the isolated production of a free-

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[23] George R. Knight, *Philosophy & Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective,* 3rd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 31.

[24] Mary-Lou Breitborde and Louise Boyle Swiniarski, *Teaching on Principle and Promise: The Foundations of Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006), 34.

[25] Leonard J. Waks, "Three Contexts of Philosophy of Education: Intellectual, Institutional, and Ideological," *Educational Theory* 38/2 (Spring 1988): 167.

standing product or the isolated inquiry with a free-standing result. Rather, it always has a relational context . . . consisting of a series of conversations."[26] Waks' comments reinforce the idea that philosophy and education must stand in close relation to one another for either to fulfill its responsibilities.

The reason I am developing this definition of education that closely reflects its philosophical connections is due to the topic matter of this dissertation. While I will follow the development of Western philosophical tradition, this research must at the same time track key educational concerns in the Western tradition. Philosophy and education cannot be separated because they are in reality the two sides of one coin. What a group believes, it will also transmit.

Elliot Eisner's seminal work in curriculum design will provide a theoretical framework for this part of my discussion and definition of education, helping further connect the arenas of philosophy and education, and how they will be viewed in this research. Eisner carefully differentiates between normative and descriptive theories of education. A normative theory of education places emphasis on subjectivity and on perceived value.

> Education itself is a normative enterprise—that is, it is concerned with the realization of aims that are considered worthwhile. Thus, educational activities are not simply concerned with learning, because what a person learns might have negative consequences for his or her development. What makes experience educational is its participation in a set of values. To the extent to which those experiences participate in those values, they are educational.[27]

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[26] Ibid., 168.

[27] Elliot W. Eisner, *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs,* 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994), 35.

In contrast, a descriptive theory of education emphasizes objectivity and a set of generalized and accepted conclusions. Descriptive theory obviously finds a home in the natural and social sciences where predictability and "fact" are given highest status. While both of these theories work together in a dialectical interchange in most educative settings, Eisner correctly points out that normative theory pervades and, in a very real sense, supersedes descriptive theory . . .

> . . . because the methods of inquiry we choose and the criteria we choose to apply to test truth . . . reflect beliefs about the nature of knowledge. These beliefs are basically value judgments. Those embracing a different conception of knowledge will employ different methods of inquiry and may therefore come to different conclusions about the world. In short, epistemological commitments reflect a set of values.[28]

As Eisner notes, education is never simply an objective transmission process; there is always a filtering process that occurs that is connected to a group's subjectively-tuned worldview. What a society perceives as important, valuable, and foundational will in turn focus what that society will investigate, prioritize, and transmit to its constituents.

Eisner's identification of the overriding influence of normative educational theory leads me to conclude this important discussion on the relationship between philosophy and education with one last necessary comment. As I develop the pathway that the early Greek philosophers took to arrive in medieval Europe and to Western

[28] Ibid., 39. Eisner goes on to state that a thoroughly descriptive theory of education is, in essence, impossible because "people's ingenuity and need for forming their own purposes, their curiosity, and their irascibility foreclose on the possibility of developing a theory of curriculum comparable to that of atomic particles. We are 'condemned' to a life of exciting uncertainty in which the flexible use of intelligence is our most potent tool," Ibid., 40-41. This statement reinforces the more "normative" educational theory approach hinted at by the title of his book.

thought in general, I will be relying on a key educational proposition: the process of education is always determined to some extent by contextual (i.e., historical) parameters. While any given philosopher/educator will have certain personal beliefs and priorities regarding how education should function in society (what might be called the internal dimension of an individual's educational philosophy), that person will also have a particular and unique historical content in which he or she must function and by which he or she is necessarily influenced (what might be called the external dimension of an individual's educational philosophy). It is this historical context that forms the normative experience out of which any particular writer or thinker works, either arguing for or (more often) against the general educational philosophical views in which he or she is immersed by virtue of being a member of a particular time-bound society.

The key to a successful venture into a study of the foundations of education is to read and to find meaning and relationships in the primary texts of these writers. Secondary texts can certainly be used with great profit, but the greatest potential for personal growth is a concerted effort to wrestle with the primary documents, allowing the original writers to speak for themselves without the filter of biased interpreters. The problem with reading primary texts is that a full understanding of the writer's external circumstances must precede one's reading, otherwise we are prone to take a writer's ideas out of context, to see a writer's views as meaningless in our current historical situation and/or try to apply a writer's principles anachronistically, temptations succumbed to by many.

"The apparent ease with which children learn is their ruin." This quote from Rousseau begins the chapter of a book on my desk, like so many books today, in hopes of motivating the reader by way of fascination and intrigue to move further into the coming chapter. We are a "quote-unquote" society, where any phrase from any recognized author can be picked out of the air to definitively defend any given point. This penchant toward using divorced-from-context quotes as a means to deliver and seal our arguments is an interesting breed of pseudo-intellectualism that has important implications for our reading of educational philosophy.[29] Take, for instance, the quote above. Without knowing something of the context in which Rousseau lived and wrote, his quote can be interpreted in one of several ways, but only one of which Rousseau intended. Does Rousseau intend to say that children are naïve and need to be protected from unwanted educational influences? Or does he intend to indicate that education for children needs to move from an environment of ease to one of rigor and discipline so they can avoid ruin? Or does Rousseau think that the point of educating children is beyond hope and the road to ruin for children is inevitable? Only by understanding Rousseau's world can we begin to understand Rousseau's words.

Understanding context is not just reserved for isolated quotes. Whenever we open a primary text, before we ever read a word, it is imperative that the historical situation of the writer be acknowledged and generally identified. No writer ever composed a piece of writing in a vacuum; the surrounding culture of the time dictates

[29] This does not mean that any quote in a book or paper is inappropriate. But the way in which we use citations from other sources must be tempered with a knowledge of how the original writer intended his or her words to be heard. The hard work of setting context always overrules cleverness or perceived connection to the reader's world.

far more than readers often realize. Our tendency when reading texts, both recent and ancient, is to read them from our own perspective, to read into the text our contextualized situation. When we do this, we make the text into something it was never intended to be, namely, a commentary about us and our times. As Martha Nussbaum has noted, "There are no surer sources of disdain than ignorance and the sense of the inevitable naturalness of one's own way."[30] In order to understand what a text might have to offer us today, we must first do the more difficult work of understanding what the text meant to its original readers. This two-step plan—what did it mean; what does it mean—helps us avoid the relativism and subjectivism inherent in our ethnocentric and "present-time centered" perspective. The world, after all, does not revolve strictly around us, as much as we might want it to, and to mold texts in our image is to make their authority null and void. James Hillesheim states this same observation in a positive way when he says, "Perhaps the greatest benefit to be derived from a consideration of educational theory is a growing awareness of one's place in a *continuum* of thinkers and practitioners" [emphasis added].[31] Hermeneutics is the method of trying to recreate the original context of a literary piece in order to capture the true essence of the original message.

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[30] Martha C. Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 68. Nussbaum provides a healthy discussion on the idea of inherent bias and ways to avoid it in chapter four, "The Study of Non-Western Cultures."

[31] James W. Hillesheim, *Intellectual Foundations of American Education: Locke to Dewey* (Lawrence, KS: The University of Kansas, 1993), 3.

When applied to philosophical readings, the following steps are crucial to take prior to examining any primary reading and are pertinent to my dissertation research question and thesis:[32]

1. Explore the historical setting of the writer. When and where did the author live? What kind of society did the writer know? What key national and international events would have been on the mind of the author? These questions involve some knowledge of the geographical, historical, political, and sociological background of the writer. Compare, for sake of an extreme example, the contextual setting of Plato's *Republic* in the fourth century B.C. Greece, Rousseau's *Emile* in eighteenth-century France, and Dewey's *Democracy and Education* in twentieth-century America. Each of these key educational philosophy texts addresses similar issues but from widely different societal perspectives. The only way these three texts can be legitimately discussed together in terms of their value to current educational thought is to view them first through their unique historical contexts.

2. Identify the literary genre of the piece you are reading. Is the text a book, a paper delivered at a conference, correspondence to a friend, random unpublished notes? All of these literary genres have unique characteristics that will provide clues about the text's meaning. For example, we would read the inaugural address given by John Stuart Mill at the University of St. Andrews in 1867 much differently than we would read Rousseau's *Emile.* Mill's address was given orally, with prescribed

[32] Adapted from a paper I submitted to Professor Suzanne Rice for the course "Philosophy of Education" (T&L 998, University of Kansas), May 17, 2000, titled, "Ten Methodological Questions: Investigating the Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education."

content and time parameters, within a long-standing tradition of similar addresses behind it. Rousseau's book borders on the style of a novel.

3. Recognize the intended audience of the original work. This issue usually closely coincides with the issue of genre, since audience often dictates genre. In Mill's case, he was addressing his academic peers while Rousseau wrote for a large and public audience. You can imagine without even reading these two particular writers how their work would be affected by their intended audiences.

4. To whom was the writer responding? One important point that is often overlooked in reading educational philosophy is the fact that most writers made the decision to write in the first place to counter someone else's argument or point of view. In other words, if there were no other perspective, why spend the time formulating an argument? To what was the writer responding? Every philosophical discussion is based on prior ideas that have been shared in some kind of educational forum. "A particular philosophy is a conscious response to its predecessors and cannot be understood apart from them: Aristotle is incomprehensible without Plato, Kant without Hume."[33] The problem that we modern readers have is this: we have our writer's argument in front of us, but all too often we do not have the counter argument or the point of departure available to us. The author knew his or her opponents well as did, no doubt, the original audience. However, we have often only one side of the argument. The analogy to this situation is like listening to one side of a phone call. Our job is to try to fill in the other side of the conversation, to try to

[33] Wallace I. Matson, *A New History of Philosophy, Vol. II: Modern* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1987), Preface.

reconstruct the opposition argument. When we read Plato, we must immediately understand that his work was a direct counterargument to the established views of education advocated by the Sophists, who placed rhetoric over reason. While Plato sometimes acknowledges the opposition point of view, the careful reader will need to supplement a reading of Plato with an overview of the Sophist tradition in order to see how and where Plato departs from their line of thinking. On the other hand, when we read Dewey's *Experience and Education,* the other side of the discussion is clearly laid out by Dewey as he explains his position in distinction to both traditional and progressive education. Here we are given a clear view of all sides of the discussion, yet the reader can be further aided by understanding Dewey's developing arguments during the almost thirty years prior to the writing of *Experience and Education.*

To return now to my dissertation topic, contextual exploration and literary hermeneutics play a critical role in my research involving four distinct interpretive layers. First, the early Greek philosophers wrote within a particular historical context. While their ideas have universal qualities, to fully understand Plato or Aristotle demands an understanding of their own unique setting and societal background. To claim the Greeks as foundational to Western philosophy implies a grasp of the original context (note the four steps outlined above) of these writers. Second, as these Greek thinkers move into the hands of succeeding generations and non-Greek cultures (e.g., the Muslims), the original Greek writers are read and commented upon

within a new context that is separated from the original by time and context.[34] So when, for example, Arabic philosophers read the Greek philosophers they produced commentaries on these writings that were affected by their current historical setting. As we will see, both the original Greek writings along with these Arabic commentaries came to Europe at the same time. To claim the Greeks as foundational to Western thinking is to acknowledge some kind of filtering process through which the Greeks arrived in Europe, through the worldview of the intervening and transmitting cultures.[35] Again, as we read Islamic commentaries on the Greek philosophers, we must take into consideration the four hermeneutical steps mentioned above. Third, the Greek writings were transferred to Europe via translations. For my study, I am interested in how the Arabic translations of the original Greek language

[34] The modern discipline of hermeneutics was inaugurated in the early 1800s by the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, in regard to getting at the unadulterated original meaning of biblical texts. Since that time, the tools of philosophical hermeneutics have developed into a recognized method that allows modern readers better access to the mind of ancient writers, and not so ancient writers. Gadamer, following Heidegger, takes as his point of departure Nietzsche instead of Schleiermacher and sees hermeneutics as a largely negative rather than positive inquiry into the past. Rather than trying to find an objective starting point in studying the original authors' context, Gadamer sees all reality as hopelessly subjective, as do most postmodernist theorists like Rorty, Derrida, and Faucault. See Richard M. Rorty, "Hermeneutics, General Studies, and Teaching," Selected Papers from the Synergos Seminars, 2, (Fall 1982) George Mason University, in *Classic and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Education,* ed. Steven M. Cahn (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1997), 522-536 ; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 2nd revised edition (New York: Continuum, 1993); and Richard Wolin, "Untruth and Method: Nazism and the Complicities of Gadamer," *The New Republic* (May 15, 2000): 36-45. That this more recent view deserves attention is not debatable; indeed these critical theorists have opened many new avenues of inquiry especially regarding the bias of Eurocentricism so prominent in Western writing. For the purposes of the issue under consideration, we will claim that some form of objectivity remains for the reader to discover but readily acknowledge that the tools of literary deconstructionism are invaluable.

[35] Whether Islam only translated and transmitted or indeed transposed early Greek philosophical ideas will be one of the subtopics of this dissertation. Here is one opinion on the matter, to which I will later add support: "All across the Islamic world, from Cordoba to Baghdad and farther still to the east, scholars and artists borrowed, but never without digesting." Hollister and Bennett, *Medieval Europe: A Short History*, 99.

were in turn translated into Latin for European consumption. Here is yet another hermeneutical bridge we must cross. There is an old Italian proverb that says, *Traddutore, traditore:* "Translators, traitors" or in English idiom, "Translators are traitors." When one language is moved into another language, there are subtleties that are lost or added because no language is fully equivalent to another. As Greek was translated into Arabic which was then translated into Latin, those of us in the Western tradition must understand, to some extent, the vagaries of the translation process and the discipline of textual criticism.[36] Fourth, once the Greek writings penetrated Western Europe, those writings were again subjected to the same hermeneutical concepts as I have already noted above. Did Aquinas read Aristotle in the same way that the Muslims did? In the same way that Aristotle's contemporaries did? Those of us in the Western tradition must realize that the Greek ideas were read and understood in medieval Europe initially through the filtering agency of Scholasticism and the Roman Church. That our Greek intellectual foundation has since passed through the filters of other cultural and historical agencies is also part of our philosophical tradition.

Asking the questions about how the Greek thinkers were originally to be understood, how they were presented to Europe and how they were received by Europeans, is to take us back to Cremin's idea of educational linkages and Eisner's

[36] A significant part of this research will center on the Muslim translation tradition, especially on translations of Greek writings into Arabic and from Arabic into Latin. This is a part of the analysis that will prove to be the key to unlocking the answer related to how Greek philosophy found its way into Europe in the Middle Ages. An important resource in this area of research is Dimitri Gutas' significant work, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries)* (Oxford: Routledge, 1998).

idea of normative educational theory, which helps us remember that philosophy is never done in a vacuum. To say then that we read Plato or Aristotle in the Western tradition is to say that we read them from a Western tradition viewpoint, one that includes the transmission filters just mentioned. That is not to say that we are, in a deterministic way, a mere product of our past. There is always room and need for transformation along with transmission. However, a clear understanding of our foundations is the necessary first step in current dialogue and debate about what it means to think from a Western perspective.

1.3 Sources of Influence for this Dissertation

As the previous discussion has indicated and the subtitle of this dissertation substantiates, the normal "inch wide, mile deep" schema of typical dissertation work, while not being ignored, is being modified for this analysis. Rather than a narrowly defined topic, this project is purposely taking a wide-angle view of its topic of inquiry. For this particular study, it is important to see points of connection over a long period of time in order to fully understand the question at hand. So, with full realization of the implications of working on a dissertation that is "a mile wide" (but, I trust, more than an inch deep!) let me move now to the two key sources of impetus for my study. Both of these influencing sources are derived from my current teaching assignments at MidAmerica Nazarene University and include my courses in Philosophy of Education and Ancient and Medieval History of the Christian Church. Immediately the reader will recognize these sources as complementary and

interdisciplinary, as is this dissertation in general. The related fields of education, philosophy, and European history will form the nexus of my research and their points of confluence will define my thesis.

1.31 Philosophy of Education Textbooks

The key starting point for my interest in the above stated research question can be found in an examination of textbooks that cover the history and philosophy of education. Most of these kinds of textbooks take one of two approaches to the topic. Nathan Nobis describes these two approaches:

> For the most part, courses and textbooks in philosophy of education approach philosophy of education as either thematic or figurative history of philosophy of education, or moments in intellectual history that have influenced thought and practice in education. By "thematic" history I mean the "—isms" approach—idealism, pragmatism, realism, and so forth. By "figurative" history I mean reading some (or about) figures like Plato, Rousseau and Dewey, among others." [37]

Nobis goes on to state his thesis that these historical approaches to the teaching of philosophy of education are insufficient, and presents instead a non-historical, pragmatic approach. Whether or not Nobis is correct, it remains true that philosophy of education textbooks do indeed largely approach this topic historically. Typical history and philosophy of Western education textbooks begin with the Greek fathers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, whose work comes to us from circa 500 B.C. However, with this strong and common foundation, the timeline submerges quickly out of sight with the fall of the Western Roman Empire after A.D. 500, as we move

[37] Nathan Nobis, "Cultivating Philosophical Skills and Virtues in Philosophy of Education," paper presented at the MidWest Philosophy of Education Society, Fall 1999.

into what is commonly called the Middle Ages. In many texts, we move quickly from the Greek fathers and their place in later Roman education to people like Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) and John Calvin (1509-1564) of the Renaissance/Reformation period and Rene Descartes (1596-1650) and John Locke (1632-1704) of the Enlightenment period. So we see that between A.D. 500 and 1600, (a period of more than a full millennium!) the witnesses to Western education are difficult to find and identify. Various texts do include the medieval thinker Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)—less frequently Anselm (1033-1109) and Abelard (1079-1142)—and the place of Scholasticism. However, even including these figures, the chronological gap following the fall of the Roman Empire is substantial, with the cultural gap even more significant.

By way of example, we can look at two current, well-respected texts that treat the foundations of education timeline. Howard Ozman and Samuel Craver [38] take a thematic approach to the topic. In dealing with Idealism, they move from Plato to Augustine to Descartes. In dealing with Realism, they move from Aristotle to Aquinas to Bacon and Locke. Gerald Gutek[39] takes a biographical approach to the topic. After discussing Plato, then Aristotle, Gutek moves to the late Roman educator Quintilian, then jumps to Aquinas and then on to Erasmus. In both cases, the gap

[38] Howard A. Ozman and Samuel M. Craver, *Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. and Merrill/Prentice-Hall 2003).

[39] Gerald L. Gutek, *Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. and Merrill/Prentice-Hall, 2005).

between ancient Greece and post-Renaissance Europe shows that a large hole exists in the timeline connecting Western intellectual development.

By way of further example, a standard "readings" text for philosophy of education by Steven Cahn[40] moves directly from Plato and Aristotle to Locke. Perhaps this is an unfair example since the book is not intended to be comprehensive in its scope and is interested in key transitional figures, but the point is that this text has jumped almost 2000 years in time without a word about the intervening period of transmission or direct witnesses to Western philosophical tradition.[41]

Some might simply attribute this blank space on our Western timeline to the period labeled as the Dark Ages or early Middle Ages, an era in Europe notorious for an interruption in culture and learning.[42] However, even if we allow for such a decline

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[40] Steven M. Cahn, *Classic and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997).

[41] Two notable minority exceptions to this textbook trend to jump over the Middle Ages are Sheila Dunn's work *Philosophical Foundations of Education: Connecting Philosophy to Theory and Practice* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. and Merrill/Prentice-Hall, 2005) and Allan C. Ornstein and Daniel U. Levine's *Foundations of Education,* 9th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006). Dunn not only has an entire chapter on the Middle Ages and another on Scholasticism but actively mentions Islamic philosophers by name as important building blocks of the medieval mind. Ornstein and Levine also mention briefly the role of Islam's role in educational history, helping to connect the historical dots. These two texts at least show awareness of my so-called "hole in educational history" but even here the explanation of Islam's place in this story is rather superficial and often relegates Islam's contribution to Western education as one of only "preserving" the Greek texts for later use by medieval European scholars.

[42] Actually, what really happened intellectually and culturally during the so-called Dark and Middle Ages has been a subject of renewed interest among many historians who see this time period rich with yet-to-be-mined resources for Western thought. See for example the award-winning book by Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Quill/William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991). After stating that a host of relevant questions remained unanswered regarding the role of the Middle Ages in later Western civilization, he notes that "these prime questions about the Middle Ages appear in recent years to be increasingly significant to American college students, to judge from the burgeoning enrollments in medieval studies courses," page 47.

in intellectual fervor during this time, the question still begs an answer: How was learning revived in Europe and specifically how did the Greek foundations of Western philosophy find their way again into discussion and dialogue? Here is the "hole in history" that has prompted my research.[43] In order to explore this "hole in history," I will be engaged in what could be called philosophical archeology, where historically framed longitudinal lines of connection and influence will be explored.[44]

1.32 Ancient and Medieval History of the Christian Church

My personal study and teaching in the area of ancient and medieval Christian Church History has also contributed to this dissertation's focus. While this area of study will be covered in detail in a later chapter, a short introduction to its significant role in this research will be provided to introduce the reader to this second point of foundational influence for this project.

Before proceeding, let me first be sure the connection between my teaching in Church History and its bearing on Western intellectual development is clear: from the time of Constantine's conversion to Christianity through the European Renaissance, the history of the Christian Church and the history of Europe are inseparable.[45]

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[43] See Appendix A.

[44] The term "philosophical archeology" may not be novel, but I first encountered it in a book written by James S. Taylor (*Poetic Knowledge* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998], 1). Notably, this book was published as the result Taylor's dissertation work at the University of Kansas under the supervision of James Hillesheim, who is also a member of this present dissertation committee.

[45] The lively debate about whether or not Constantine's conversion to Christianity was authentic or not is beside the point. The fact that Christianity was changed in status to a legal religion under Constantine, to be followed within 70 years by Christianity becoming the official religion of the

Constantine's decision to legalize Christianity, in the 313 Edit of Milan, is a clear watershed moment in Western Civilization's history. "Constantine made two personal innovations that were of the highest important for the future. The first was his decision to embrace the Christian faith. The subsequent rise of Christianity and its acceptance as the official religion of the empire transformed the whole nature of late classical culture."[46] From this point to the modern era, one cannot separate out the secular and sacred elements of European development. It is not an exaggeration to state that virtually every noted scholar and writer in both Western Europe and the eastern Byzantine Empire from Constantine's time to the beginning of the Enlightenment period of the 1600s was a Christian, certainly in name if not in deed. The universal authority of the Church, the Roman in the West and the Orthodox in the East, shaped in every tangible way the course of European history during this historical era.

This history of Christian Europe also had an impact on the non-European arena of this same time period, especially the development of the Islamic Empire, which was to dominate the Mediterranean basin for almost 600 years during the Middle Ages. For it is the clash of Christianity, both East and West, with Islam that creates a unique religious boundary zone that greatly influenced the course of Western culture and thought, as I will show. To understand the flow of Western

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Roman Empire shows the monumental role Constantine played in the future of not only the Roman Empire but of Europe in general. See A.H.M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (New York: Collier Books, 1967).

[46] Brian Tierney and Sidney Painter, *Western Europe in the Middle Ages, 300-1475,* 3rd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1978), 18. The second innovation was his move to Constantinople.

educational and philosophical development demands an understanding of European history, and European history demands an understanding of the steering currents of religious influence during this time when church and state interests merged and when Christians and Muslims, when they were not fighting, found occasion for dialogue and cross-fertilization of ideas.

Christians and Muslims are often pitted historically as archenemies, each seeking the destruction of the other. However, when the geographical boundary lines between these two groups are examined and when times of direct conflict move to times of relative peace, there is evidence of mutual interaction, collaboration and dialogue. The most long-term area of intercultural interaction was on the borders of Asia Minor, between the Byzantine and Islamic Empires. Even though these two civilizations pressed each other in battle over a period of almost 800 years, their close proximity allowed for ideas to flow between them. We will see that this region of cultural exchange will become an important component of the reason behind Islam's later intellectual development.

One of the most notorious of these Middle Ages boundary points with Europe was, of course, the multiple Crusades directed against the Muslim superintendents of the Holy Land area by European ecclesial powers, regional kings and knights, and a multitude of rabble. While the Crusades were intermixed by hotly contested, bloody battles between the two sides, there are many reports of Crusader-Muslim interactions that were congenial and mutually supportive. An interchange of culture and ideas occurred during the intermittent times of relative peace.

> "When the Muslim traveler, Ibn Jubayr, journeyed through the Holy Land in 1184 he was astonished to find it economically and socially flourishing despite the increasingly unhealthy political situation. Here and there Franks and Muslims tilled the fields together and shared common pastures for their cattle. The great caravans were able to travel in safety to Acre where they were dealt with by a smoothly functioning customs system staffed by Arabic-speaking Christians."[47]

But a much more fertile area in which to explore such an interchange of ideas with the West can be found in the modern countries of Spain and Portugal, particularly Spain. Here is found the most interesting and dynamic Christian-Muslim boundary zone in the Middle Ages. As the Islamic Empire rapidly expanded in the years following Mohammed's death in 632, Muslim dominance raced in all four directions of the compass from its beginnings in the Saudi peninsula. Its westward march took it quickly along the northern African, Mediterranean coast all the way to the gate of this inland Sea, known commonly as Gibraltar, itself an Arabic name.[48] Muslim forces soon marched north, taking over most of the Iberian peninsula by the middle 700s, giving it the Arabic name al-Andalus. From here, the plan was to invade central Europe, past the Pyrenees mountains and into what is now France. At the

[47] Hans Eberhard Mayer, *The Crusades,* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1988), 52. On the issue of nonviolent contact between Crusaders and Muslims see, for example, Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2004). A unique first-person account of these times and of cultural contact between Muslims and Christians is found in *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman & Warrior in the Period of the Crusades: Memoirs of Usamah Ibn-Munqidh,* trans. Philip K. Hitti (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). Interestingly for this study, this translation is part of Columbia University Press' "Records of Western Civilization" series. Another series of uniquely Arab perspectives on the Crusades, and colorful accounts of Christian-Muslim interaction, is found in the works selected and translated by Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

[48] Gibraltar comes from the Arabic name of Jebel at-Tariq meaning mountain of Tariq. It refers to the general Tariq ibn-Ziyad who led the Islamic invasion of Iberia in 711. Earlier it was known as Calpe, one of the Pillars of Hercules. The cataclysmic change from Greek to Arabic dominance during this time period is illustrated nicely in the geographical name transformation.

famous battle of Tours in 732, the Frankish leader Charles Martel defeated the Muslim army and the Islamic advance in the West was stopped.[49] Spain remained, though, in the hands of Muslim leaders to some degree until the 1200s. During this time of Muslim occupation, there developed a very open community between the newly arriving Muslims and the remaining Christians (and Jews). It is here, at the southwestern corner of Europe, that I will specifically concentrate my efforts to see how Muslims and Christians interacted, especially in regard to philosophical issues.

The reason that this particular intercultural interaction is so important to this dissertation is that it is here, in medieval Spain, where Greek philosophical thought found a path into Europe. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the West in 476[50] and with the consolidation and isolation of the eastern Roman Empire under Christian leadership in the Byzantine era, use and transmission of the early Greek thinkers became scare in Europe. The West fell into the hands of various barbarian groups of Germanic origin. This time of upheaval did not lend itself to intellectual pursuit and the Greek texts were functionally lost to the lands under barbarian rule. Even though Greek writings were used by such a notable Latin personality as Augustine as late as

[49] What if Charles Martel had not been successful in this battle? Would I be writing this dissertation in Arabic rather than in an Indo-European derivative language? This is no idle question and has been much discussed by historians of Middle Age Europe. Whether we can go so far as to say that the Battle of Tours saved Europe for Christianity and the Franks and from Islam and the Muslims is debatable. But it certainly cemented Frankish dominance in the West and led to the Carolingian revival of learning in the next century while confining Islam to the southern extremities of Europe.

[50] The year of Rome's last emperor, Romulus Augustus, having been disposed and exiled by the German, Odoacer. This date remains a bit artificial. The eastern part of the Roman Empire continued on at Constantinople for another thousand years. Some say the Empire "fell" when it split into its western and eastern sections with capitals and rulers in each area in Constantine's dynasty era (306-363). However, using the date of 476 for the fall of Rome has provided a convenient break for many examiners of Western history between the Ancient and Medieval periods.

the early fifth century, by the time of Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome (i.e., the Pope) at the end of the sixth century, the West was basically monolingual and translations were rare. Where in earlier centuries Romans took pride that their education included the Greek language, Latin became the sole language of the shrinking educated class. As Eby and Arrowood conclude: "The decline of Latin and Greek scholarship, to which many factors had contributed, had been greatly accelerated by the victories of the barbarians; so that teaching and learning were at a low ebb in the age of St. Gregory."[51]

In the eastern half of the old Empire, Constantinople's libraries did indeed retain much of the early Greek literature of its ancestral roots but there was an increasing reluctance to use these pagan authors in educational arenas that did not easily connect Greek philosophy and Christian theology. While the Greek texts were not lost in the East, they were used in ways that did not easily allow free discussion and exploration of ideas. Karl Krumbacher admits that, "in the view of most scholars, Byzantium was the vast death-chamber of the Hellenic race of giants, only worthy of attention on account of the remains and jewels preserved there from a time long gone."[52] While this view is overly dramatic and incomplete, it does remind us that the Byzantines were first Christian, then Greek. The reasons for this kind of limited suppression are not difficult to pinpoint. In the East, intellectual development was

[51] Frederick Eby and Charles Flinn Arrowood, *The History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1940), 663.

[52] Noted by Karl Krumbacher, *The History of Byzantine Literature: From Justinian to the End of the Eastern Roman Empire (527-1453),* 2nd ed. (Munich: Beck, 1897; University of Notre Dame, 2001), 17-18.

confined to a large extent by a centralized imperial leadership. This Christian-based authority wielded a heavy hand on educational pursuits, especially those concerned with philosophical exploration that used the early Greek thinkers as a primary starting point.

> The single most important factor accounting for the unique uses which Byzantium made of these resources [including the classical tradition in Greek] is the unbroken continuity of central imperial rule . . . Habituated to directives and funding from above, Byzantine thinkers developed a mindset that precluded the establishment of autonomous institutions for the creation and dissemination of ideas independent of imperial policy.[53]

As time progressed, to read and use Plato and Aristotle was permitted, but not without supervision and critique. Reason and faith were partners as long as faith held the leading role. As an example of this policy, the emperor Justinian, in 529, closed the 900 year-old Academy of Plato's creation, effectively shutting off the intellectual pursuits of the non-Christian professors located there and forcing the leading members of the Academy to relocate to areas east of Byzantine influence.[54]

> Although the Greek [Christian] apologists and church fathers, all thoroughly educated in classical rhetoric and philosophy, recast theology in classical form with no difficulty, a separation between secular and religious thought . . . developed in the post-patristic period. [Much later, in the 11th century, we still find that while] both Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy were taught [in the Byzantine Empire] . . . Students were required to hold philosophical

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[53] Marcia L. Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 113.

[54] The point of the closing of the Academy should not be taken too strongly; the Academy by this point was not a strong institution and this action was not taken against Hellenism but against paganism. "Therefore, if we maintain that the most important and decisive characteristic of Byzantinism in opposition to Antiquity is Christianity, the beginning of the Byzantine era should be placed in the time of Constantine the Great, not in that of Justinian, who closed an isolated pagan institution and raged against the remnants of paganism," Krumbacher, *The History of Byzantine Literature*, 7. Still, the shadow of Christian authority over liberal thinking is significant. And in some minds, Hellenism and paganism were difficult to separate.

> disputations in the presence of the patriarch, who was charged with reporting ideological deviants to the emperor . . . By this time, Byzantines had come to regard philosophy as an alien science: not as a part of the Greek heritage that served the true, Christian wisdom but as a discipline exterior and even irrelevant to it . . . [the] chief philosopher in Constantinople, John Italos (fl.1055) . . . lost his post for seeking to express Christian theologian terms of Aristotelian logic . . . efforts to combine philosophy and theology [were] now unwelcome in Byzantium.[55]

Norman Cantor provides a sad commentary on the contribution of the eastern part of the split Roman Empire to the continued use of its natural Greek intellectual foundations and, in turn, to Western Civilization in general:

> The history of Byzantium is a study in disappointment. The empire centering on Constantinople had begun with all the advantages obtained from its inheritance of the political, economic, and intellectual life of the fourth-century Roman Empire. Except in the realm of art, in which the Greeks excelled, Byzantium added scarcely anything to this superb foundation. The east Roman Empire of the Middle Ages made no important contributions to philosophy, theology, science, or literature.[56]

Cantor goes on to note that one of the major reasons for Byzantium's failure to advance intellectually can be attributed directly to "the tremendous pressures that were exerted almost incessantly on the frontiers of the empire from the sixth century onward. The Byzantines had to apply all the resources at their command to hold back the Arabs and their other enemies, and in so doing they dissipated their best energies and allowed their culture to become more and more rigid."[57]

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[55] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition*, 115, 127.

[56] Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1963), 226.

[57] Ibid., 227. A subtopic I will explore briefly later in the dissertation is the relationship between cultural and intellectual development within a society and the forces that impinge on that society's ability to survive and thrive. As we will see, those societies that have a relatively stable environment (militarily, socially, politically, medically, etc.) have the potential for increase in intellectual expansion due to the fact that energies that once were devoted to the primary activities of providing a safe setting

Even allowing for Byzantium to be a preserver of the Greek classics, there was an even more significant problem with Greek ideas flowing from the East to the West. Here again Christianity is involved. The Roman Empire had from its outset a natural cultural and geographical divide between its western and eastern sections, its Latin and Greek sections as we might describe. As the Christian Church exploded across the Mediterranean scene, first as an illegal religion, later as the official religion of the Roman Empire, it too followed this natural division. When the Empire founded capitols in both Rome in the West and Constantinople in the East, this divide became painfully obvious. With the fall of Rome, West and East were irreparably separated politically and, over time, theologically as well. As I will explore, the western and eastern sectors of the Church were divided over many issues, both practical and speculative, resulting ultimately in the Schism of 1054 in which the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches split decisively and completely. Greek Byzantium and Germanic Europe were already so culturally distinct that intellectual flow between the two was limited to only a trickle before this complete closing of conversation. The flow of thought from Byzantium to the West would not actively be opened again until the fall of Constantinople at the hands of the Ottomans and the beginning of the Italian Renaissance.

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in which to live can be allocated to more philosophical enterprises. Societies in turmoil typically make poor candidates for systematized and thoughtful reflection on the deeper issues of life, although conflict does often provide the catalyst for philosophical reflection once stability is fixed. On the other hand, societal stability is not the only variable important to intellectual advancement. The second key component of a thriving intellectual community is dynamic interaction with ideas outside of the society's sphere of thinking, otherwise philosophical stagnation sets it. Societal stability along with geographical proximity to a natural flow of contending ideas are two key components to understanding the flow of Western intellectual development.

I have outlined how the path for the Greek classics to medieval Europe was jeopardized. Following the decisive split of the Roman Empire, East and West, after the fall of Rome in 476, custodianship of the early Greek writings fell to the East. But from here they would find a poor road to travel into Europe; they were used with caution by the new Christian leaders in Byzantium, they were written in a language becoming unknown in the West, and civil dialogue between East and West was largely blocked due to the growing division between the eastern and western parts of the Christian church, which finally resulted in the East and West Christians pronouncing mutual excommunications on each other. Greek philosophical texts and ideas would not easily find their way into Western Europe from Constantinople.

The West, once it fell into the hands of the only mildly civilized barbarians of the north, began to lose its cultural vitality. Learning became the possession of the minority, often confined to isolated outposts of monastic sanctuaries. With Greek a forgotten language in the West, and with few Latin translations at hand, the Dark Ages begin in Europe without the light of the Greeks, who once had admonished humanity to free itself of the dullness of life based on sensorial repetition and uncritical thinking and to find the unchanging light of Truth.[58] The Greek philosophical texts and ideas would not be rediscovered internally in the West due to lack of intellectual energy and scholarly resources. As was mentioned earlier in relation to the Byzantines, when life necessitates an emphasis on the basics of survival, and where peace is regularly overturned by turmoil, philosophy finds a poor

[58] Here referring to Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," in *The Republic of Plato*, Part III, Book VII, Chapter XXV.

home. As Aristotle said long ago, it is only "when pressing needs are satisfied, [that] man turns to the general and more elevated."[59]

What then will be the final resting place for Plato and Aristotle? Are they doomed to be buried deep inside Byzantine's remote and musty libraries or relegated to the minds of a few close-mouthed Latin monks? This is precisely where my research will open the door on medieval Spain; I will seek to demonstrate that a third option becomes available to Western Civilization. A major part of this dissertation will detail the arrival in al-Andalus of the Greek philosophical fathers via the route of Islam. The following survey serves as an outline of the key facts in this analysis, to be developed more thoroughly in the following chapters.

As the Islamic Empire moved into the vacuum presented by the waning Roman Empire, Muslim invaders not only took over the new land, but also the ideas of the people they conquered. "As the Arabs extended their religion and their language, the conquered peoples, in turn, passed on their civilization to their Mohammedan conquerors."[60] This assimilation of ideas occurred initially in the eastern portion of the fading Roman Empire, in the area then known as Syria[61] and now known as southern Turkey and further east in the area then known as Persia, and

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[59] Quoted by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History,* trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956, based on the 1899 publication by The Colonial Press), 80.

[60] Artz, *The Mind of the Middle Ages,* 132.

[61] In Syria especially, scholars who were less inclined to adhere to Byzantine's conservative and reactionary view toward pagan Greek authors sought refuge to continue their intellectual pursuits. "Before Arabic, the first Semitic language into which the Greek philosophical texts were translated was Syriac," Cristina D'Ancona, "Greek into Arabic: Neoplatonism in Translation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 18.

now know as Iraq/Iran.[62] These areas had accumulated the vast resources of Greek philosophy in the period preceding the Islamic expansion and now their philosophical wealth was plundered by the new Muslim overlords. Within two centuries of the Islamic advance, most of these early Greek works were available in Arabic translations. The cultural center of the Western world, as far as active and engaged thinking, was shifting from Rome and Constantinople to cities with stranger, non-Western sounding names: Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova. The Muslims were great book collectors and avid manuscript translators, taking the literature of their newly acquired territories and placing it in their growing centers of learning. According to Gutas, while there is not yet a full survey of the Arabic translations of all the Greek philosophers,

> a century and a half of Graeco-Arabic scholarship has amply documented that from about the middle of the eighth century to the end of the tenth, almost all non-literary and non-historical secular Greek books [philosophical works are included in this classification] that were available throughout the eastern Byzantine Empire and the Near East were translated into Arabic . . . One can justly claim that the study of post-classical Greek secular writings can hardly proceed without the evidence in Arabic, which in this context becomes the *second classical language, even before Latin* [emphasis added]. [63]

Islam, during the Middle Ages, represented the key intellectual power of the Mediterranean basin, easily surpassing the darkened minds of western Europe and the

[62] "By the middle of the sixth century Persia had become a great repository of Greek science and philosophy, the cultivation of which had greatly declined in Europe," Artz, *The Mind of the Middle Ages*, 148.

[63] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 1-2.

increasingly immobilized and isolated minds of Byzantium.[64] "For centuries, Islam was both a threat and a source of commerce and ideas to both the Greek East and the Latin West. Its great cities and the courts of its princes became, from the eighth century through the twelfth, the centers of a brilliant material civilization and of a great scientific, philosophic, and artistic culture."[65] Names not usually mentioned in Western texts but whose influence directly and indirectly played a role in later Western thought include al-Kindi, abu Bishr Matta, al-Ghazali, al-Farabi and the great Avicenna. Interestingly, not all of these philosophers were necessarily Muslim (one Christian is among the group just highlighted), but the common thread is that they are all working with Arabic language translations of early Greek works. A particularly rich blend of intellectual creativity was found in the western sector of the sphere of Islamic influence, namely Spain, where philosophical discussion and dialogue continued to exert influence until the twelfth century. As a result of this intersection, the "medieval scholars crossing the Pyrenees found the quintessence of all preceding science distilled by the theorists and practitioners of Islam. Historically,

[64] In fairness, I must note here that there are some scholars who feel Byzantium deserves better press in relation to its place in the continuity of Greek philosophy and its contribution to Western tradition, including its ability to use and understand the Greek classics. I agree that Byzantium did play an important role in this historical chain of events and that it was not as hostile to Greek philosophy as some may think (in fact, Byzantium Christians were deeply influenced by Greek ways of thinking in several important areas of theology), but I contend that its connection to the West was so impoverished that it ultimately took the Arab linkage in Spain to bring the West back into discussion with Greek thinking in an active way. On Byzantium's role as the primary bridge to the West, in contradistinction to my thesis, see for example, Michael Angold, *Byzantium: The Bridge from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001) and Glanville Downey, "The Byzantine Church and the Presentness of the Past," *Theology Today* 15 (April 1958): 84-99.

[65] Artz, *The Mind of the Middle Ages,* 132. The recent bestselling book by Hugh Kennedy titled *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World: The Rise and Fall of Islam's Greatest Dynasty* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2004) alludes to a similar conclusion.

by entering the arena of Islamic civilization they had indeed entered the whole vast, vibrant world of antiquity as well."[66] It is here in medieval Spain that I will pause and explore the rich soil of interaction between Muslim and Christian (and, not unimportantly, Jews) and the wide range of research that has encompassed this region and era.[67] I will examine in more detail perhaps the most notable character in this historical review, Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Rushd, known simply to the Latin West as Averroes.

Averroes (1126-1198) is known for his translations and commentaries of Aristotle's and, to some extent, Plato's works. Before his time, only a few translated works of Aristotle existed in Latin Europe, and as I have noted, they were not much studied or known widely. Significantly, it was through the Latin translations of Averroes' work in Arabic that the work of the early Greek philosophers began to find a way into Europe and into Western scholarship. For example, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), noted as a key personality related to Western philosophy of education and a student of Aristotle, is sometimes called "the first disciple of the Grand Commentator (i.e., Averroes)" having obtained his texts and intellectual priorities from this Arabic-speaking philosopher, even though he violently disagreed with Averroes' conclusions. Having offered this colorful description of Aquinas, the 19th

[66] Thomas Goldstein, *Dawn of Modern Science* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988), 98.

[67] See, for example, the following: Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975); Bernard F. Reilly, ed., *The Medieval Spains* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Olivia Remie Constable, ed., *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); Richard Fletcher, *Moorish Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); George Makdisi, "Interaction Between Islam and the West," *Revue des Stude Islamique* 44 (1976): 287-309; Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and the Medieval West* (London: Longman Group, 1975).

century French philosopher and philologist Ernest Renan goes on to say, rather remarkably, that, "St. Thomas owes practically everything to Averroes."[68] The journey from Aquinas leads directly through Scholasticism and the early universities of Europe that, in turn, opens the way to the period of the Renaissance and the beginning of modern philosophical inquiry. S.M. Ghazanfar states this same thesis in even stronger terms:

> A very large part of the period includes the multi-dimensional development of Arab-Islamic thought. During this period, Islamic scholarship not only absorbed and adapted the re-discovered Greek heritage but also transmitted that heritage, along with its own contributions, to Latin-Europe. Thus was provided the stimulus for developing the human intellect further, for conveying a mold for shaping Western scholasticism, for developing empirical sciences and the scientific method, for bringing about the forces of rationalism and humanism that led to the 12th century Medieval Renaissance, the 15th century Italian Renaissance and, indeed, for sowing the seeds of the European Reformation.[69]

Would modern Europe have found its way back to the Greek classics without the aid of Arabic-speaking thinkers? Probably. The dual metaphysical systems described by Plato and Aristotle represent the kind of thinking basic to all humans. I agree with Hillesheim's suggestion that "we all have a natural inclination either toward idealism or realism,"[70] which suggests that all human minds resonate in

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[68] Ernest Renan, *Averroès et l'Averroïsme* (Paris: A. Durand, 1852), cited by Majid Fakhry, *Averroes, Aquinas, and the Rediscovery of Aristotle in Western Europe* (Georgetown University: Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, History and International Affairs, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, January 1, 1997), 5. Renan initiated the use of "Averroism" in the historiography of philosophy.

[69] S.M. Ghazanfar, "The Dialogue of Civilisations: Medieval Social Thought, Latin-European Renaissance, and Islamic Influences," Foundation for Science Technology and Civilisation, May 2004, <http://www.muslimheritage.com/uploads/DialogueOfCivilisations.pdf>, accessed June 29, 2007.

[70] James Hillesheim, History and Philosophy of Education, class lecture notes, University of Kansas, Spring, 1999. Will Durant (*The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the Greater*

similar ways. In addition, I will show that there were other alternative paths that the Greek works took into Western Europe, such as the path of the Irish monasteries and the path of isolated and conservative scholars from Byzantium. To state that these fundamental "Greek" ideas would never have appeared in Western thinking without the Arab-Spain connection is to press the issue too far. However, the fact that Greek texts became available and that Greek ideas became acceptable during this particular period of the Middle Ages over the Islamic bridge does recognize that Europe's academic future was definitely influenced in direct ways by non-Europeans.

So while the battle of Tours stopped the invasion of Muslim armies into central Europe, it did not stop the invasion of Muslim-carried ideas into Western thought. The road to Europe for the Greek fathers and for Greek ideas takes a peculiar route; from the early Roman Empire, past the twin dead-ends of the conquered and dark-aged Western Roman Empire and the reclusive and constrictive Byzantine Empire, through an upstart religion/culture born out of the desert sands of Arabia. Carried westward by warriors and scholars the length of the Mediterranean, this intellectual cargo finally found a most unusual location for the osmosis process to take place in the southwestern corner of the European continent. Those who carried the Greek tradition to Western Europe and Western Civilization had Arabic names! Perhaps it should be no surprise (although it is to most who finally discover this fact) that the famous Renaissance painting by Raphael, "The School of Athens," has among its well-known Greek personages one face that is neither Greek nor ancient

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Philosophers [New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1961, first published in 1926], 59) alludes to the same point, quoting Friedrich Schlegel, "Every man is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian," from Alfred W. Benn, *The Greek Philosophers,* vol. 1 (London: 1882), 291.

(besides Raphael's own representation). There, with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, behind Anaximander of Miletus and Pythagoras of Samos, is none other than Averroes himself.[71] An Arab imposter in this group of ancient Greeks? Or did even Raphael understand the important bridge that Arabic philosopher Averroes provided these Greek minds over which to travel to later Renaissance Europe?

1.33 Thomas Cahill's "Hinges of History"

Beyond my two personal teaching interests mentioned above, there is a third influencing factor for this dissertation, one that resonates with the plan of my own research of rediscovering the foundations of Western thought and philosophy. Both of the influencing sources above point to the fact that some kind of historical "hole" exists in our examination of Western sources of philosophy, or as Ghazanfar says, a "Great Gap."[72] The 1995 national bestseller book by Thomas Cahill titled *How the Irish Saved Civilization* agrees with this general premise.[73] Although writing for a popular audience, Cahill is a noted scholar and a careful researcher of European history. In this book, Cahill takes a snapshot of a small segment of Western Civilization that has large implications for our understanding of identity as

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[71] See Appendix B.

[72] S.M. Ghazanfar, ed., *Medieval Islamic Economic Thought: Filling the Great Gap in European Economics* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2003). "The mainstream literary-history paradigm, however, has tended to present the evolution of social thought as one straight line of events, moving almost entirely across the Western world, as if denying history to the rest of the world. Thus, one observes a 'literature gap' in discussions of 'medieval' history of the West. This gap encompasses just about every discipline," S.M. Ghazanfar, "The Dialogue of Civilisations: Medieval Social Thought, Latin-European Renaissance, and Islamic Influences."

[73] Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1995).

"Westerners." He focuses on the Irish island, a remote corner of Europe in Roman times, and shows how this out-of-the-way, barbarian-in-origin, unlikely-to-succeed people end up saving the day for Europe. His thesis is that, without the Irish monastic caretakers of the cultural foundations given to them by Romans and Christians, Europe would have persisted in its intellectual darkness well past the Middle Age time period. He states that it was the Irish that preserved the cultural seeds of the early Greeks and Romans in their remote land and who then brought them back to Europe, enabling the Middle Ages to flower and flourish. For Cahill, Western intellectual development owes its existence to the work of the Irish scholars.

How the Irish Saved Civilization is part of a series of books Cahill is currently producing called "The Hinges of History." Here is Cahill's own description of his project:

> In this series, "The Hinges of History," I mean to retell the story of the Western world as the story of the great gift-givers, those who were entrusted with keeping one or another of the singular treasures that make up the patrimony of the West. This is also the story of the evolution of Western sensibility, a narration of how we became the people that we are and why we think and feel the way we do. And it is, finally, a recounting of those essential moments when everything was at stake, when the mighty stream that became Western history was in ultimate danger and might have divided into a hundred useless tributaries or frozen in death or evaporated altogether. But the gift-givers, arriving in the moment of crisis, provided for transition, for transformation, and even for transfiguration, leaving us a world more varied and complex, more awesome and delightful, more beautiful and strong than the one they had found.[74]

My own research resonates with this perspective. I want to know about our roots. Tracing our cultural lineage is important to us all (Cahill's "evolution of

[74] *Ibid.,* foreword.

Western sensibility," my "philosophical archeology quest into Western educational philosophy foundations"). So, as I read Cahill, I followed him back in time to see with fresh eyes the significant role that the Irish did indeed play in keeping civilization alive during the bleak years after the fall of Rome. I congratulate Cahill for mining this story from the hard ground of historical oversight and see that he has discovered a treasure for us all. He has found "that the history we tell ourselves, the history we learn in school, is full of holes. All sorts of things happened in the course of Western history that even well-educated people are ill informed about."[75]

Cahill is wise enough to know that it was not just the Irish who contributed to the survival and growth of civilization. His title, *How the Irish Saved Civilization,* is purposely designed as an overstatement, but one that contains more than a kernel of truth. Cahill has written three other books in this series, one about the Greek and two others about the Jewish/Christian contributions to Western Civilization, and plans three more.[76] Each of these groups provides yet another piece to the story of how the West developed and grew. My dissertation once carried a temporary title similar to Cahill's first book: "How *Islam* Saved Western Civilization." Maybe that title is presumptuous, but as in Cahill's research, my analysis does attempt to show that a significant part of the story of Europe's development is underdeveloped. Indeed, there are "holes" in our historical understandings. The role that Islam played in the growth

[75] Thomas Cahill, <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/cahill/qa.html>, accessed June 21, 2006.

[76] *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter* (2004); *Desire of the Everlasting Hills: The World Before and After Jesus* (2001); *The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels* (1999).

of Western intellectual maturity is the thesis of this project and one that I will show needs to be emphasized. We will see that Islamic philosophers of the Middle Ages are among the many "gift-givers" to Western Civilization, and perhaps the most surprising one of all. Interestingly, Cahill has been asked if he plans to write one of his books on the influence of Arabic-speaking thinkers. To this question, his response is: "Many, many readers would like me to comment on Islam. Though I will touch on Islam in Volume V of 'The Hinges of History,' Islam, not being a major source of Western sensibility, must remain substantially outside the scope of my study."[77] I find his conclusion completely inadequate, based on the research found in this project.

As in Cahill's work, this project does not purport to uncover some purposely designed conspiracy to hide the place of Islamic thought from our Western sensibilities. Yet any philosopher of history will clearly state that all historical writing carries bias and subjectivity, based on the reporter's presuppositions and background. "When historians raise the question whether history as they practice it can be objective in the sense of being value free, they are notoriously pessimistic.[78] Carl Becker observes that, "the historian cannot eliminate the personal equation."[79] Charles Beard expresses the issue well: "Whatever acts of purification the historian may perform, he yet remains human, a creature of time, place, circumstance, interest,

[77] Thomas Cahill, http://www.randomhouse.com/features/cahill/, accessed June 15, 2006. Perhaps, once this manuscript is complete, I can send him a copy for his comment and critique.

[78] William H. Dray, *Philosophy of History* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1993), 35. See also Maurice Mandelbaum, *The Problem of Historical Knowledge* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1938).

[79] Carl Becker, "What Are Historical Facts?" in *The Philosophy of History in Our Time,* ed. Hans Meyerhoff (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), 131.

predilections, culture."[80] That the story of Islam's connection to the West is an under-told part of Western history is not surprising. Christians and Muslims have had much more to separate them over the centuries than to link them. Islam's worldview has generally appeared strange from a Western perspective. The purpose of this research is not to artificially make the East and West closer than they are in reality, but to find points of connection between East and West that have legitimately existed and to fill in the historical holes that may exist in understanding what it means to be part of the Western intellectual tradition.

The rather recent inclusion in philosophy of education courses and textbooks of "far eastern" sources of thought shows a readiness in Western tradition to explore non-Western ideas. For example, I was first exposed to the writings of Confucianism and Taoism in James Hillesheim's "History and Philosophy of Education" course, (University of Kansas, Spring, 1999), illustrating a trend to move outside of European philosophical and educational parameters. The latest edition of the text I used for my own college course in Philosophy of Education, Gutek's *Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education* (2005), has just added a chapter on Confucius. Perhaps my research can follow this wave of interest and appreciation for non-traditional sources of philosophy and education. Perhaps future courses and textbooks in philosophy of education will routinely include Middle Eastern authors and thinkers as part of their curricular plan.

[80] Charles Beard, "That Noble Dream," in *The Varieties of History from Voltaire to the Present,* ed. Fritz Stern (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1956), 324.

1.4 Research Methodology

As I have stated, this dissertation takes an interdisciplinary approach to a broad topic that links both education and philosophy. My approach will be historical and sequential. I will first establish the primacy of the classical Greek philosophers within the Western tradition and will look at the historical and intellectual context out of which especially Plato and Aristotle flourished. Then I will carefully follow and trace the path these thinkers took—from the Hellenistic period, to the time of the Roman Empire, through the Byzantine and Islamic era, finally to the pivotal Middle Ages, analyzing the interplay between Christian Europe and the Islamic Empire during this key transition period in world history. This is a long road, and it will take time, both historically and within this dissertation, before we reach the central ideas related to Islam specifically. But this road is important to examine in its own right. This will be one of the unique points of my dissertation. While many have explored individual segments of the history of the transmission of Greek thinking to Western Europe,[81] I will follow the philosophical trail from beginning to end. The relationship of Muslim philosophy to Greek thought and medieval Europe will not be understood without traveling the road that comes before. So I will purposely follow Plato and Aristotle for almost 1000 years before they begin reaching the hands of Arabic

[81] For example, I. Düring and G.E.L. Owen, eds., *Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-Fourth Century,* Studia Graeca Et Latina Gothoburgensia XI (Göteborg: Göteborg University, 1960); F.E. Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs: The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1968); Stephen Gersh and Maarten J.F.M. Hoenen, eds., *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages: A Doxographic Approach* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002).

translators in order to show why Islam plays such an important part of this historical journey.

The work of Burgess Laughlin comes closest in intent to my work.[82] His research takes a similar approach in tracing Greek roots through their historical connections. Where I depart from Laughlin's plan is to make a much stronger connection between Arabic and Latin scholars of the Middle Ages. Laughlin acknowledges the Islamic translation tradition of Greek works but concludes that this tradition was little more than a dead-end in the history of how Greek thought reached Europe. My conclusion is radically different from Laughlin's, but our research question and our methodology is largely the same. Richard Rubenstein's work, *Aristotle's Children: How Christians, Muslims, and Jews Rediscovered Ancient Wisdom and Illuminated the Middle Ages,* comes closer in thesis to mine but does not provide the deep historical timeline that I propose to follow. So my work will build on the methodology of Laughlin and the conclusions of Rubenstein in a unique synthesis combined with my own interpretation of the relevant data.

[82] Burgess Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure: A Guide to the Greek, Arabic, and Latin Scholars Who Transmitted Aristotle's Logic to the Renaissance* (Flagstaff: Albert Hale Publishing, 1995). Having spent several years exploring relevant literature on my topic, I discovered this book late in my writing process. This author's plan to chart the course of Aristotle's influence from the Greek beginnings to the European Renaissance sounded much like my own research question and after digesting it I discovered a kindred spirit. This discovery was both disconcerting as well as encouraging. Any dissertation writer has the hope that he or she is traveling a path that has previously been unexplored or under-explored. The investigation of virgin territory was a driving catalyst for me in choosing this particular topic. So to find another traveler on this seldom traveled path was a bit startling. However, once I understood Laughlin's plan, I could see that my dissertation still held a unique position, especially in its view of Arabic sources of Greek philosophical transmission. So my dismay was turned into joy to find a fellow traveler with whom to join in conversation and to know that my research question was not idiomatic to the point of being irrelevant.

I will show that the historical process by which we received these early Greek ideas, (that is, the context in which Greek influence reached the West) is significant for a full understanding of what it means to claim Western philosophical citizenship. The reader will do well to have both timeline and map in hand as I review the context and content of the Islamic Empire's role in Western development. I will emphasize quite literally the "lay of the land" because history is always yoked to geography.[83] I will agree with Hegel's assumption that history has an essential basis in geography. Hegel demonstrates that world history is played out at those unique and natural intersections on the globe that give rise to interchange of ideas and whose natural climates allow for personal resources to be trained on the philosophical rather than mere survival. Hegel points out, in his discussion on the "geographical basis of history" that Greece and the Mediterranean basin occupied perhaps the most conducive geographical position known on earth for intellectual development; so it is no surprise that history's most dynamic growth has occurred in this region.

> We began with the assertion that, in the History of the World, the Idea of Spirit appears in its actual embodiment as a series of external forms, each one of which declares itself as an actually existing people. This existence falls under the category of Time as well as Space . . . The true theatre of History is therefore the temperate zone; or, rather, its northern half, because the earth there presents itself in a continental form, and has a broad breast, as the Greeks say . . . the Mediterranean Sea is similarly the uniting element, the centre of World-History. Greece lies here, the focus of light in History . . . The Mediterranean is thus the heart of the Old World, for it is that which conditioned and vitalized it. Without it the History of the World could not be conceived.[84]

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[83] "The more I work in the social-studies field the more convinced I become that Geography is the foundation of all," James A. Michener, "The Mature Social Studies Teacher," *Social Education* 34/7 (November, 1970): 760.

[84] G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History,* 79-80, 87.

I do not admit to being entirely Hegelian in my approach. For example, I do not have the optimism of Hegel that world history is a rational process moving relentlessly toward the spirit of freedom. I would subscribe to a more nonlinear and random view of how history unfolds. While not fully subscribing to his metaphysics, I do however feel comfortable in appropriating his epistemology and, using his well-known triadic formula "hypothesis-antithesis-synthesis" that attempts to sequence historical interaction, his macro-view of world history. Thus, my approach can be described as a macro-historical analysis of my research question. A better term to describe my work is that of a synthetic history, showing points of connection over a large timeframe with the goal of parsing out a unified philosophical theme.[85] What is synthetic history? Jon Butler says, "everyone knows the smart aleck answer: history without original research . . . 'It's just based on secondary works.'"[86] Indeed, I will use a large majority of, but certainly not exclusively, secondary sources for this macro-study, since a large part of my work will deal with the historiography of Western philosophy. However, we need a better definition of the genre of a synthetic or synoptic history and Butler provides a starting point: A synthetic history "emphasizes several overarching interpretive themes that may be complementary or contradictory (or both) but share one common function: the themes guide almost all

[85] An example of a similar approach, but without a core focusing theme, can be found in Richard Tarnas' in-depth work, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding The Ideas That Have Shaped Our Western View* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1991).

[86] Jon Butler, "Synthetic Rewards," Common-Place, http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/cp/vol-01/no-03/author/>, accessed June 30, 2007.

the material that appears in the book."[87] Butler goes on to emphasize, "Synthetic history isn't for the weak at heart . . . it obviously requires a broad knowledge of the field."[88] Synthetic history attempts to immerse itself in the details of the past while at the same time maintaining a position that allows for recognition of themes and trends, to "connect the dots." Synthetic history must be content at times to live with ambiguity; history is complex and cannot be told without rough edges. But seeing the whole is the focus of such a project. Using a microscopic approach, viewing all the details, is often the appropriate course of research, especially in a historical study. But sometimes standing back and using a telescopic approach to see the bigger picture helps us to see the complexities, the connections and the continuity that exist in any historical exploration. That will be my goal.

Whether my historical approach can be defined as speculative or critical, according to common definitions of historical inquiry, is difficult to pinpoint and falls into both categories to some extent.[89] Certainly, the major scope of my work is of the critical variety, carefully analyzing the historical connecting points that link ancient Greek philosophers with medieval European thinkers through the medium of the Arabic translations and commentaries. However, it also has a speculative perspective, seeing the course of Western intellectual development from a "bird's eye" view with

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] "The aim of the speculative philosopher of history is to discover in past events an overall pattern or meaning which lies beyond the ordinary purview of the historian. The aim of the critical philosopher is to make clear the nature of historical inquiry, to elicit and examine its fundamental assumptions, its organizing concepts, and its methods of research and writing, with a view to locating it on the map of knowledge," Dray, *Philosophy of History,* 1.

direct implications about how to interpret what is meant by Western philosophical and educational tradition. My speculative interest lies in the part of my inquiry that seeks to know not only "how" but "why." I will constantly have in the background, if not the foreground, of my study this question: What meaning does this historical research have for current philosophical and educational discussion?

There is no pretense in this project that any one person can claim to be an expert in all ages and cultures. With Cahill, I will not pretend to understand everything.

> . . . I am not really pretending to do that. My goal is somewhat more modest: I want to trace the effects to their causes . . . one of the problems with contemporary historians is that, as they concentrate on ever smaller patches of history in ever greater detail, we, their audience, understand less and less about the larger forces that have shaped us. I am trying to overcome this fragmentation by seeing our history whole, as a series of vast movements, often taking many centuries to reach their accomplishment. Of course, I shall fail, at least in some ways. But the human mind cannot turn aside from the attempt.[90]

My historical survey is not revisionist in the strict sense but there will be revisionist themes in my work. Revisionist historians are sometimes viewed as individuals whose main job is to take to task the hard work of historians before them. Revisionists have been accused of an "I'm right, everybody else is wrong" mentality. However, historical revisionism has a legitimate academic use. It is the reexamination of historical facts, with a goal of updating history with newly uncovered, more accurate, or less subjective data. Simply said, history as it has been traditionally told is not always entirely accurate or as objective as it needs to be. Revisionist history can

[90] Thomas Cahill, <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/cahill/qa.html>, accessed June 22, 2006.

provide a great service to the scholarly community by probing into historical conclusions that have not fully accounted for biased assumptions. Such is the case with the present study. Since Islam and Christianity, both Byzantium and European varieties, were more often enemies than not, any collegiality between these two cultures is bound to be downplayed by historians writing from either perspective. This is especially so for later Western observers of medieval Europe, who might see Islam as an antithesis to Christian thought and as a vacuum for intellectual endeavor rather than a seedbed for philosophical vigor. Our Eurocentric perspective places natural blinders on Western minds that often create a blind spot in our historical evaluations.[91] "The Arabic component of our paradigmatic view of the Middle Ages has always remained incidental; it has never been systemic . . . the myth of Westerness [is] too much shaped by cultural prejudices [that are] still quite powerful in the real world of literary historiography."[92] S.M. Ghazanfar correctly notes, "Few problems in civilisational [sic] dialogue are as delicate as that of determining the extent of the influence of one culture upon another. This is especially true with respect to the links between medieval Islam and Latin-Europe."[93] Christopher

[91] See for example, Samir Amin, *Eurocentricism,* trans. Russell Moore (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989) and R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

[92] Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 9, 13-14. See also, Eugene Myers, *Arabic Thought and the Western World* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1964); John R. Hayes, ed., *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of the Renaissance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1978); and George Sarton, *The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 1951).

[93] S.M. Ghazanfar, "The Dialogue of Civilisations: Medieval Social Thought, Latin-European Renaissance, and Islamic Influences."

Dawson strongly asserts this same idea, perhaps even more obvious when he was writing in the last century:

> We are so accustomed to regard our culture as essentially that of the West that it is difficult for us to realize that there was an age when the most civilized region of Western Europe was the province of an alien culture (i.e., Islam) . . . At a time when the rest of Western Europe was just emerging from the depths of barbarism, the culture of Moslem Spain had attained complete maturity and surpassed even the civilization of the East in genius and originality of thought . . . All of this brilliant development of culture is completely ignored by the ordinary student of medieval European history. It is as though it were a lost world which had no more to do with the history of our past than the vanished kingdom of Atlantis.[94]

Cultural blind spots are difficult to remove, even more difficult to discover. The question I will bring back to the forefront at the conclusion of this dissertation is the question of revising our preconceptions concerning our intellectual roots. Specifically, can Westerners overcome "the great difficulty in considering the possibility that [we] are in some way seriously indebted to the Arab world, or that the Arabs were central to the making of the medieval Europe?"[95]

With these critical introductory parameters set, one further and last comment will be made. I claim the richness of the Western tradition of culture and scholarship as my own. I have neither Arab nor Muslim roots. Although the languages of Latin and Greek generally lie within my personal field of accessibility, I speak and read only a little Arabic. What can a person like me possibly say about the Islamic-Christian connection of the Middle Ages? Perhaps because my personal observation post is not naturally biased in favor of the central subject of this paper, I may be in a

[94] Christopher Dawson, "The Origins of the Romantic Tradition," *The Criterion* 11 (1932): 222-248.

[95] Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, xii-xiii.

position to see this history in a unique light; a Westerner striving to see an Easterner's point of view. There is much I will miss due to my nonuse of Arabic primary sources, to be sure. But there may be much to be gained by looking at the largely English sources on this subject to see how this history is treated and, as much as possible, to give this often overlooked historical issue a fair hearing in an age when Islam is not usually equated with intellectual or cultural advancement by the West.

Perhaps there is also a bit of selfish reflection in this project as well. My personal journeys have often brought me into contact with the Middle East and with the Muslim culture. While I have enjoyed and profited from each of these opportunities, I cannot deny the fact that Islam appears strange to my Western eyes. However, I also cannot deny the fact that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world and stands second only to Christianity in size. Today the West and East are being forced into contact again, much like the period of the Middle Ages a thousand years ago. Perhaps this interaction will prove to be more humane and profitable than it generally was a millennium ago, as characterized by the Crusades. But the negative images and the stereotypes persist today. Westerners and Easterners, Christians and Muslims seem to have little common ground.

Former United Nations General Secretary, Kofi Annan gave the following words in a speech titled, "The Dialogue of Civilizations and the Need for a World Ethic," that pertain to my research plan: "Civilizations no longer exist as separate entities in the way they once did. But modern societies still bear the strong stamp of history, and still identify with each other along cultural fault lines. Among these fault

lines, the one that generates the most discussion today runs between Islamic and Western societies."[96] As history is recast in light of how philosophy in the West was connected to philosophy in the East in days gone by through this research project, perhaps new points of connection will be found today that can lead to mutual respect and appreciation, and most importantly, to open dialogue.

[96] United Nations General Secretary, Kofi Annan, "The Dialogue of Civilizations and the Need for a World Ethic," Oxford University Centre for Islamic Studies, June 28, 1999.

Chapter 2

The Greek Foundation

"Ancient Greece forms the founding myth of Europe."[1] With this pregnant truth as a focal point, I begin this research by seeking an appropriate beginning point. In order for me to trace the path of classical Greek thought into Europe via the Islamic Empire of the Middle Ages, I choose to start this journey much further back in time. If I plan to follow Greek thought through the centuries, I need to first present a picture of what Greek thought entails; I must focus our attention on what exactly we will be looking for in this historical analysis. So I will begin with an examination of early Greek thought and its ageless axioms of philosophical inquiry that will provide the signposts I will search for later, on the historical pathway to medieval Europe.

The Greeks of the classical era play a unique role in European historical foundations, often considered the primary progenitors of Western culture, politics, literature, art, and philosophy.[2] As Shelley says in his Preface to *Hellas*: "We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their roots in Greece. But for Greece—Rome the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illuminations with her arms and we might still have been savages and idolaters." No single society has been given more credit for the direction of post-Renaissance Europe than the ancient Greeks. The shores of the Aegean Sea provided

[1] Stewart Home, "The Art of Chauvinism in Britain and France," *Everything* 19 (August 1996): 50.

[2] See, for example, the set of essays in R.R. Bolgar, ed., *Classical Influences on European Culture: AD 500-1500* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

the land and resources for the first true civilizations in Europe, namely the Minoan and the Mycenaean, from which would spring the early Greek culture. Plato colorfully described the Greeks living around this beautiful Sea and among its many islands as "frogs around a pond." From these "frogs," the Western world would come to find a definition and a model of civilization and a way of thinking worthy of honor and emulation. Eby and Arrowood observe, "With the Greeks we share a spiritual kinship that we feel for no other ancient people; with them we are almost completely at home . . . To them we trace the beginning of creative activity and those logical methods of thinking that have made for genuine intellectual progress."[3] Samuel Butcher, in an earlier era, stated this case in even stronger terms, "The Greek genius is the European genius in its first and brightest bloom."[4]

In few areas is this Greek cultural foundation more evident and obvious than in the arena of educational philosophy. The ancient Greek legacy lives on in the way Western philosophy and education have been discussed and applied, undiminished to the present. For the purposes of this dissertation, I am narrowing and directing my attention to two early Greek educational philosophers that have often been used to summarize the brilliance of Greek culture as a whole, namely Plato and Aristotle. In these two personalities, Greek thought found its apex and from them the Western intellectual tradition finds its most clear ancestors. As Dunn succinctly notes,

> Western philosophy begins with Plato and Aristotle. Fundamental issues between these two Greek philosophers have continued to shape contemporary

[3] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 160.

[4] Samuel Henry Butcher, *Some Aspects of the Greek Genius* (London: The Macmillan Co., 1916), 40.

> education throughout the centuries . . . Many would agree that all of philosophy is either Platonic or Aristotelian and that thinkers of their caliber are few and far between in our civilization.[5]

Most current philosophy of education textbooks rightly begin their historical surveys with a review of the fundamental ideas of Plato and Aristotle, recognizing the essential nature of building both philosophical and educational thought with these two men's reasoned foundations firmly in place.

Since my thesis assumes that the classical Greek foundation, especially the work of Plato and Aristotle, is indeed valid and reasonable to the majority of Western minds today, I will not spend space debating this certainty. What I will do in this chapter is set the context in which these Greek thinkers flourished, showing that the work of Plato and Aristotle must be understood in light of two key influences: the pre-Socratic thinkers and the shared ideas of previous non-Greek cultures. From this study, I will show that the "Greek way of thinking" did not arise in a vacuum. That there were significant contributing and prior influences is an important part of my discussion if I am to show later what elements of this Greek influence moved into medieval Europe. Just as classical Greek philosophy arrived in Europe as "something more" by virtue of its immersion in Muslim culture (as I will show later), so too the beginnings of classical Greek philosophy were "something more" than the mere

[5] Dunn, *Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 14. Here is a more colorful, and perhaps overstated, description of the foundational position of the Greeks: "Whether the Greeks saw things most freshly because they came first or it is pure good luck that, having come first, they answered life with unmatched alertness, they in either case keep ageless sparkle, as of the world lit by a kind of six-o'clock-in-the-morning light and the dew imperishably on the grass. The Greek mind remains in ours, because this untarnished freshness leaves it, like youth itself, our first exemplar," John H. Finley, *Four Stages of Greek Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 2.

accumulated wisdom of the Greeks alone by virtue of related ideas they borrowed and assimilated from earlier, non-Greek civilizations.

For later Europe, it is not enough for us to simplistically state that the works of Plato and Aristotle were translated and became available for reading in medieval Europe. With these literary works, more importantly, came a worldview and definite ontological assumptions. Defining and illustrating the true nature of Greek philosophy will assist my discussion of how this intellectual force shaped Western civilization. When we say that Western society is the inheritor of Greek thought, I want to be sure that statement has meaning beyond the fact that we have the writings of the early Greeks on our bookshelves.

Once I review the fertile ground out of which Plato and Aristotle grew, I will provide a basic review of what it means to "think in Greek ways," to understand and utilize the basic philosophical assumptions and tools that Plato and Aristotle crystallized and presented to the thinking world. I will address the question, "What are the enduring qualities of Plato and Aristotle that have found such resonance in Western thought?"

I will conclude this chapter with a candid look at what we mean when we use the adjective "Western" in dialogue, in light of the context of the Platonic and Aristotelian environment. When I arrive later in this dissertation at the place of the Muslim world in the transmission of Greek ideas, I will have set the premise that there is perhaps a wider range of contributing intellectual forces at work in Western thought than is typically affirmed. The very adjective "Western" carries with it

assumptions, context, and bias that I wish to explore before moving further into my historical analysis of how Greek philosophical and educational ideas became available to later Europe. As I will attempt to prove, the linear course of Greek thought to European thought actually moves nonlinearly through an Eastern component (Islamic) and even begins with an earlier Eastern component (Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Hebrew), giving support to my general thesis that a strict Eurocentric, Western perspective is not only limiting, but incorrect.

Like the axiom that states a fish does not know it is swimming in water, so too it may be difficult for those of us within the Western tradition to fully grasp what that tradition actually consists of. This dissertation will try to show some of the preconceptions that accompany a Western perspective of philosophy and education. I will attempt, from a limited angle, to understand the "water" in which we move and breathe intellectually.

2.1 The Context of Plato and Aristotle's Work

To comprehend the work of Plato and Aristotle, an understanding of their philosophical and cultural Greek predecessors is mandated. And to comprehend the early development of the Greek people, an understanding of their unique geographical region must first take place. Two items stand out in a geographical overview of Greece. First, the Aegean Sea and, more broadly, the Mediterranean Sea form the physical backdrop for Greek civilization. Most early Greeks lived along the shorelines of the Sea, with all major occupation points no more than 40 miles from

the water. This connection to the Sea and thus to the most basic form of transportation in ancient (and not so ancient) times provided the Greeks with access to the rest of the Mediterranean world. It is this connection that will prove to be so fruitful in providing the Greeks with a plethora of ideas from neighboring societies from which to borrow and critique. Second, the shoreline of the Greek area is extremely rugged. While the great civilizations before Greece, of Mesopotamia and Egypt, were built around common river systems that encouraged a kind of homogeneity along their connected lengths, the Greek landscape encouraged just the opposite. The jagged coast built natural barriers between points of land and in semi-isolation each of these occupation areas developed into independent city-states. To some degree, this unique geographical configuration would aid the desire for independent thinking that will later become a hallmark of Western thought.

While the earlier precursors to Greek civilization started in earnest circa 1600 B.C., a survey of Greek intellectual development usually starts with the Archaic or Pre-Classical Period, beginning in the ninth century B.C. and concluding around 500 B.C. It is within this period of Greek history that we find the epoch writer Homer and the composition of his Iliad and Odyssey tales. More importantly for my purposes, it is also during this period that we find the earliest of the Greek philosophers, known commonly as the pre-Socratics, their name indicating their relative historical position in relation to Socrates, and his followers, Plato and Aristotle. While, for many,

Western philosophy functionally begins in the Socratic period, an understanding of those thinkers who came before are an important beginning point to our discussion.[6]

What we might think of as "philosophic thought" first appears in Greece in a poem, *Theogony*, written by Hesiod about 725 B.C. *Theogony* retells the myths of the gods and speculates in part about the origins of things and the order of the universe. From this beginning point, the pre-Socratics offer a rich range of speculative discussion on the origin and nature of reality. The pre-Socratic philosophers placed a unique emphasis on questions of the physical world; Aristotle once referred to them as "Investigators of Nature." Their interests included mathematics, astronomy, and biology. However, as philosophers, they went beyond scientific investigation. They emphasized the unity of things, and rejected shallow mythological explanations of the world.[7] Their interests included metaphysics, theology, ethics, and logic. Unfortunately, only fragments of the original writings of the pre-Socratics survived into later time, often contained in the works of later philosophers like Aristotle, and modern scholars are often forced to make educated guesses about the full extent of their ideas.

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[6] See for example, Robin Waterfield, *The First Philosophers: The PreSocratics and Sophists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, M. Schofield, *The PreSocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983); W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. 1: The Earlier PreSocratics and the Pythagoreans* and *Vol. 2: The PreSocratic Tradition from Parmenides to Democritus* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1962, 1965).

[7] The groundbreaking research on the attributes of Mythic/Mythopoetic thought is generally recognized as the work of Henri Frankfort, H.A. Frankfort, John A. Wilson, Thorkild Jacobsen, and William A. Irwin, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man, An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), which helps us understand and appreciate the more rationalistic approach of the early Greek philosophers.

Pre-Socratic philosophers desired most of all to find the material principle (ἀρχή) of things, their unchanging essence and the unifying factor in the world they observed.

> What faced them every day, however, was not the eternal but the mutable—all the multiplicity, diversity, motion, and change they perceived in individual beings that go from nonexistence to birth and life and, finally, to death, decay, and nonexistence . . . It is not possible, they reasoned, to make sense of what is mutable, what is becoming, what passes so fleetingly into existence and then is gone forever. But because there is also in our experience a quality of permanence . . . we do not live in an arbitrary universe but a patterned one. If this is so, there must be an underlying *thing* that never changes . . . the uncreated material out of which all the mutable things spring.[8]

Thales, often called the father of Greek philosophy, claimed that water was the basis of all things. Anaximenes took the element air for his foundational principle. Anaximander assumed that nothing tangible could qualify for the first principle. Instead, he offered the idea of an undefined, unlimited substance (το ἄπειρον), itself without elemental qualities, out of which the world was formed.

Pythagoras saw the world as a perfect harmony, and dependent on an understanding of the relationship of numbers as the basis of fully grasping the world. Xenophanes saw God as the eternal unity, infusing the universe, and governing it by his will. Parmenides and Zeno affirmed the idea that unchanging existence was alone true; change was only an appearance without reality. Empedocles agreed with the unchangeable nature of substance. However, he also supported a plurality of such substances, namely, the four elements: earth, water, air, and fire. From these the world existed through the interplay of two forces—love as the cause of union, strife

[8] Thomas Cahill, *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter* (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2003), 146.

as the cause of separation. Anaxagoras described the ordering principle of reality as Mind (νους).[9] Leucippus and Democritus developed the doctrine of "atoms," small primary bodies infinite in number, indivisible, and imperishable.

Heraclitus believed fire (πῦρ; flux, motion, change) was the basic structure of reality, guided by logos (λόγος)—defined as "logic" or "reason"—emphasizing, rather than harmony, the perpetual disharmony in nature. The Eleatics, especially Parmenides, took exception to Heraclitus' ideas and generally expanded the exploration of the pre-Socratics to a deeper and different level when they denied that the physical senses could give access to unchangeable truth, since the world of sense allowed only a view of phenomenal existence. However, reason can perhaps take us to the stated goal of discovering ultimate and unchanging reality.

What these questions all raise is the issue of "the one and the many." How can there be unity in a world that appears in multiple forms? The pre-Socratics' involvement in the metaphysical question of the distinction between appearance and reality and in the epistomological question of dialectical reasoning in an effort to understand what is real set important standards for the future development of Greek thought.

One final group of influential pre-Socratics deserves our attention, forming the immediate context for the work of Socrates. In reaction to the Eleatics, the Sophists held that all thought rests solely on the subjective apprehensions of the

[9] Anaxagoras is noted as being the first to bring philosophy to Athens, which will become the fountainhead of classical Greek philosophy, beginning with Socrates.

senses.[10] Specializing in logic and rhetoric, the Sophists' view of the world was dominated by an intellectual and moral relativity that placed "man as the measure of all things." Prominent Sophists included Protagoras, Gorgias, Hippias, and Prodicus. It was against the Sophist position on the inevitability of relative truth that Socrates would make his philosophical stand.

The pre-Socratic thinkers clearly showed that philosophy was composed of both content and activity, both conclusions and tools. While the content of much of pre-Socratic metaphysical theory was soon overturned in preference to other less simplistic ideas, their tools were enduring and provided for later Greek (and Western) thought a threefold definition of the scope of philosophical inquiry:

1. *Speculative thinking* expresses human curiosity about the world and about reality, trying to understand in natural and reasoned, rather than mythical, terms how things really are, what they are made of, and how they function.

2. *Practical thinking* emphasizes the desire to influence personal and corporate conduct by investigating the nature of life and the place of human beings and human behavior in the bigger scheme of reality.

3. *Critical thinking* involves a careful examination of and dialogue on the foundations upon which thinking relies, seeking to achieve a method for assessing the reliability of various proposed philosophical positions. It could be supported that it is this third dimension that clearly embodies the true work of a philosopher.

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[10] See Edward Schiappa, *Protagoras and Logos: A Study in Greek Philosophy and Rhetoric* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003); G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981); W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Sophists, Vol. 3, Part 1: A History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

Using these three definitions as a guide, the pre-Socratics began their work primarily as speculative thinkers and then later added the dimensions of practical and critical thinking.

> Relying on the use of reason, largely unaided by scientific apparatus, the pre-Socratic philosophers pursued their questions relentlessly in every direction. However, this reliance on reason alone could divert attention from practical matters, and this aspect of Greek thought is one of the best illustrations of an aesthetic, intellectual delight in the workings of the mind; contemplation was regarded as a good in itself.[11]

The idea of community, of the Greek *polis,* kept practical concerns within arm's reach of these philosophers. "When the earliest philosophers became more and more drawn to abstract reasoning for its own sake, there was a reaction in the persons of the Sophists who trained their considerations on human existence rather than on the stuff of the universe."[12] So the second of the three philosophical dimensions mentioned above became part of the pre-Socratic contribution to later Greek thought.

The pre-Socratics often, at least at first, worked alone or in small schools and hammered out their metaphysical designs as isolated views of reality, without the benefit of critical dialogue from opposing positions. However, over time, careful examination of opposing viewpoints became part of the pre-Socratic philosophical contribution as well. The debates between Heraclitus and the Eleatics offer a prime example of this kind of dialogue as do the extended conversations of the Sophists. To be sure, there was little in the way of compromise in these early conversations, but

[11] C.G. Thomas, "The Legacy," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. C.G. Thomas, 21.

[12] Ibid.

dialogue did occur, ushering in the third of the key philosophical approaches noted above.

Cahill provides an important summary of the pre-Socratic philosophical influence in Greek thought:

> Generations before the great blossoming of Athenian philosophy under Socrates and his student Plato, these PreSocratics were already sketching out the program that all Greek philosophy would subsequently follow. It was built on three assumptions: the phenomena we experience immediately possess no ultimate importance; there must be an ultimate, eternal, and (despite Heraclitus) unchanging reality; it is the task of the philosopher to . . . *attain* that reality and then direct others to the correct path. This was the strictly philosophical strand of their enterprise, which also lent the philosopher the mantle of a religious sage . . . But there was also the scientific strand, which they pursued without telescopes, mircroscopes, or lab experiments . . . Though some of them did find it useful to make simple observations of the visible world, they all believed they could *think* their way to the truth by way of what Albert Einstein would call *das Gedankenexperiment*, the thought experiement.[13]

2.2 Non-Western Influences on Greek Thought

While the connection of classical Greek thought to the pre-Socratic tradition is an obvious point of context, the influence of non-Western societies on Greek thought may not be as obvious. Remembering that the Greeks were sea people points us in the direction of cultural connections made through trade and travel contact with foreign civilizations. The fifth and fourth centuries B.C. provide the time frame in which Plato and Aristotle, preceded by Socrates, did their thinking and writing. What intellectual developments preceded this time period in areas outside of Greece and

[13] Cahill, *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter,* 149.

which of these groups may have had contact with the Greece civilization thereby providing cultural fodder from which Greece thought could borrow and critique?[14] Three civilizations that preceded the Greeks will be briefly examined, each of which provided philosophical context for the classical Greek thinkers' own work, each of which are Eastern (not Far Eastern)[15] or Middle Eastern in orientation.

Let me introduce this section by retelling one of those important anecdotes Plato was fond of telling. In the *Timaeus*, he recounts how the Athenian legislator Solon visited the Nile delta and told stories of the first foundation of Athens to the Egyptian priests he met there. Although in Solon's view these myths went back to a very remote antiquity, one of the priests pointed out that Egyptian historical traditions were older. "You Greeks are always children, there is no such thing as an old Greek," the priest teased Solon. "You are young in soul," he continued, by way of comparing Greek historical traditions to the infinitely more ancient and grander traditions of Egypt. The priest then related to Solon the true story, as he saw it, of the origins of Athens which he said the Athenians themselves had forgotten. This "true" story of Athenian origins, told by a foreigner, provides the framework for Plato's discussion

[14] As I have alluded to previously, many philosophy of education texts simply begin their topic treatment with the Greeks, without setting prior context. This is the same case with Tarnas' research of the evolution of the Western tradition (*The Passion of the Western Mind),* a starting point I find superficial at best, misleading at worst.

[15] I will not examine the Far Eastern civilizations of China and India, who also lay claim to ancient intellectual roots and who may have had indirect influence on Mediterranean culture. The Indus River Valley civilization lays claim to a rich cultural tradition and its influence on its western neighbors is especially worthy of investigation, but my dissertation will be limited to Mediterranean-related societies, including the Mesopotamian. I also will not dwell on the Mediterranean-based Phoenician civilization which indeed did provide a willing trading partner with ancient Greece but whose unique intellectual developments are less well documented.

in the *Timaeus* of God and man, of space, time, and eternity. Sabine MacCormack, noting this Plato parable, agrees that there is "the question of how the components of the cultural tradition we ascribe to 'the West' have been assembled, and how therefore we understand the origins of the culture of 'the West.'"[16] MacCormack goes on to emphasize that while intellectual borrowings from one culture to another are a worldwide phenomenon,[17] "the interest that Greek . . . mythographers, philosophers, and historians repeatedly demonstrated in taking stock of cultural imports . . . shows that otherness was part and parcel of Greek . . . cultural self-definition."[18]

The way in which Greek civilization found its way philosophically within the world community can be looked at from three competing perspectives.[19] The "Aryan model" denies significant influence on Greece by outside civilizations and proposes

[16] Sabine MacCormack, "'The West,' the Liberal Arts and General Education," American Council of Learned Societies, Occasional Paper No. 10, March 18, 1989, <http://www.acls.org/op10intro.htm>, accessed July 3, 2007.

[17] At this point, I am keenly reminded of the modern phenomena of what is known as "intellectual property," especially with the advent of the Internet and its ease of information access and dispersal. While I am in no way advocating for less stringent policies regarding copyright infringement or appropriate citation of works used by others, I find it mildly amusing that today's society is so concerned with the individual's contribution to intellectual growth that we have neglected to a fault the contribution of the community at large to that individual's ability to do so-called original research. Every scholar's work is in some way an extension or hybrid of work that has come before. As the twelfth century philosopher Bernard of Chartres is noted as saying, we are all dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants (Latin: Pigmaei gigantum humeris impositi plusquam ipsi gigantes vident). The full quote, as noted by John of Salisbury, writing in 1159 in his *Metalogicon,* reads: "Bernard of Chartres used to say that we are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, so that we can see more than they, and things at a greater distance, not by virtue of any sharpness of sight on our part, or any physical distinction, but because we are carried high and raised up by their giant size."

[18] MacCormack, "'The West,' the Liberal Arts and General Education."

[19] Based on the work of Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afrosiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (New Brunswick, NJ: .Rutgers University Press, 1987). While I am not in agreement with all of Bernal's conclusions, his basic premise of shared cultural ideas is sound. I only use here his initial research scaffolding, not his entire methodological matrix. See the critique of Bernal by Mary Lefkowitz, *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth As History* (New York: New Republic and Basic Books, 1996).

that a purely and uniquely Indo-European instinct created the Greek genius. "In so far as the Greeks were presented as an isolated race of genius who laid the foundations of European civilization, they could be used to support the idea of superior cultures based on racial purity."[20] This Hellenocentric (perhaps better, philhellenic) and Eurocentric model downplays intercultural fertilization and supports a Greek mindset that was novel in the ancient world. An "Afrocentric model" denies to the Greeks any originally and proposes instead a "stolen legacy," especially from Egypt (or from Semitic areas in general).[21] It posits that the Greeks were a young civilization which had few or no written traditions of their own and who indeed allowed themselves to be influenced by the much older civilizations to the south and east.[22] The "diffusionist model" tries to understand the emergence of new thinking forms in terms of the open interaction between people groups and the formative effects of communication arising between them. This model states that between all cultures there is constant flow of information which allows for creative interaction and exchange. Isolation of civilization is rare and would be ultimately counterproductive in terms of cultural development. As Bernal comments,

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[20] Freeman, *The Greek Achievement: The Foundation of the Western World,* 11.

[21] See especially the much debated book by George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy: Greek Philosophy is Stolen Egyptian Philosophy* (Chicago: African American Images, 2001, first printing 1954).

[22] Historian Oswald Spengler made a similar conclusion in his influential *The Decline of the West,* published in 1918. According to Freeman, "Spengler challenged the whole idea that world history should be centered on the achievements of the civilization of Greece. He questioned the greatness of Socrates. . . even Plato. . .In his work, on the other hand, Spengler would give no privileged place 'to the classical or Western culture as against the cultures of India, Babylon, China, Egypt, the Arabs, Mexico—separate worlds of dynamic being which in point of mass count for just as much in the general picture of history as the Classical, while frequently surpassing it in point of spiritual greatness and power,'" Freeman, *The Greek Achievement: The Foundation of the Western World,* 13-14.

> It is inaccurate to refer to the relationship between ancient Egypt and ancient Greece as one of cultural theft. Probably the best description of the relationship is as "approbation." The ancient Greeks as a whole were only partially guilty of the more severe charge of plagiarism, as they often cited their Egyptian and Oriental antecedents. It was the classicists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who completed the denial of the earlier sources, giving all the credit to the European Greeks.[23]

It is this third model that I will adopt as a guiding theory in an understanding of how Greek intellectual development occurred prior to the classical age. In agreement, Eby and Arrowood comment,

> Contact with peoples of different customs and institutions has always a stimulating effect upon the mentality of men, for it encourages observation and accuracy of knowledge. It leads to reflection upon human institutions and modes of living; and thus makes for open-mindedness. Comparative observation is the foundation of all critical judgment in human affairs.[24]

With this critical understanding of cultural interaction as a basis for examining the early Greek intellectual environment, I now turn to the exploration of three key predecessors to the classical Greek era. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, my research will show that there appears to be a "hole in history" between the decaying Roman Empire and the emergence of Renaissance Europe; here is another "hole in history," namely the lack of recognition of the "eastern" historical and cultural precursors to the rise of Greek intellectual thought.[25] As Dunn simply but clearly notes, "The wisdom, insight,

[23] Bernal, *Black Athena,* 393.

[24] Eby and Arrowood*, History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 164.

[25] See Appendix A.

and knowledge of the East no doubt played a large role in the early development of Western thought."[26] As Sarton states even more clearly,

> The fact that the cradle of Western civilization is to be found along the banks of the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris was hardly understood before [the last century], but is now extremely clear . . . The time is not long past when scholars considered that the roots of Western civilization were to be found in Greece . . .We now know that the Greeks . . . were indebted to Egyptian, Babylonian, and perhaps other forerunners.[27]

Cantor reminds us that as we approach the Middle Ages of Europe (and from there move to the modern West), the study of those civilizations that preceded and influenced later Western thought must be identified, acknowledged and understood, emphasizing the fact of continuity and connection. "European medieval civilization was not produced by any one event or series of events, but by the absorption by western Europe of certain ways of life, ideas, and religious attitudes that had prevailed for many centuries in the Mediterranean world."[28] As we approach our study of how and why the Western intellectual tradition came to be, we must remember, "there was a [prior] Mediterranean culture and society that was adopted and absorbed."[29] From this presupposition, Cantor begins his study of the Middle Ages by examining the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean basin, as I will similarly do in this dissertation.

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[26] Dunn, *Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 14.

[27] Sarton, *The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East*, 12.

[28] Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages,* 1.

[29] Ibid.

2.21 Mesopotamian

The word "Mesopotamian" refers not to a specific group or civilization but to a region, literally, in Greek, the "land between the rivers," namely the Tigris and Euphrates. In this region, often called the "Fertile Crescent" and the "Cradle of Civilization," several successive civilizations flourished including the Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian. Here we find the world's first literate societies, putting into pictographic writing basic information about their lives and world. We find among the Mesopotamian civilizations a priority placed on order, structure and law (e.g., Hammurabi's laws), theology and cosmogony, and basic scientific discovery. The greatest gift bequeathed to the rest of the world, including the Greeks, by the Mesopotamians was how to be "civil" within a civilization. Also, especially within the Zoroastrian tradition, we begin to find traces of dualistic thought which we will easily identify in Plato's metaphysics.

The specific areas of geographic connection between ancient Greece and Mesopotamia are difficult to pinpoint but most likely the overland trade routes through present-day Turkey would have provided easy linkage between these groups. The Persian culture particularly,[30] which flourished in this region after the Babylonians, beginning around 500 B.C., had great impact on the Greeks, especially after Alexander the Great assimilated much of the Persian territories in his bid to conquer the Mediterranean basin and its connecting land areas from his Macedonian

[30] See Ernst Herzfeld, *The Persian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1968).

(northern Greece) origins.[31] The Mesopotamian sphere of influence in connection to the Greek world will come again fully into play as we view the rise of the Muslim Empire after A.D. 600, which took the ancient Mesopotamian setting for it capital cities.

2.22 Egyptian

Another of the "river" civilizations, the Egyptians lived and died on the ebb and flow of the Nile. The Egyptians had an incredibly long history of occupation and relative stability and great influence in the Mediterranean region. That the early Greeks and Egyptians had great opportunity for cultural connection is easily documented. "Contact with Minoan Crete and the Mycenaean Greeks is well attested. The image of Egypt is already firmly established in the Homeric poems and a plethora of Egyptian artifacts has been unearthed in Greece, the Aegean and even in western Greek colonies such as Cumae and Pithecusa in Italy from as early as the eighth century."[32]

Egypt was seen as a treasury of ideas and skills, much envied by the Mediterranean cultural groups. We have this ancient account about an Greek-Egyptian intellectual encounter that may well serve as an example of the kind of interconnection these two civilizations experienced: "Thales advised Pythagoras to go

[31] See for example, Waldemar Heckel, "Alexander at the Persian Gates," *Athenaeum* 58 (1980): 168-74; Frank L. Holt, "Alexandrian Empire," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East,* ed. Eric M. Meyers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 70-4.

[32] Csaba A. La'da, "Encounters with Ancient Egypt: the Hellenistic Greek Experience," in *Ancient Perspectives on Egypt*, ed. Roger Matthews and Cornelia Roemer (London: UCL Press, 2003), 158.

to Egypt and to entertain himself as much as possible with the priests of Memphis and Diospolis: It was from them that he had drawn all the knowledge which made him a sage and a scientist in the eyes of the masses" (Iamblichius, *Life of Pythagoras*).

The extent to which early Greek philosophers borrowed ideas from Egypt is difficult to quantify but impossible to ignore. Hooker places this influence on the high side:

> What we generally call "Greek philosophy" was almost certainly derived by the Greeks from Egyptian culture, particularly natural science (physics and math) which preoccupied Greek thought up to the time of Plato. The Greeks seem also to have derived much of their philosophical theology from the Egyptians as well. These are not modern interpretations of Greek philosophy; the ancient Greeks themselves claim without dissension that their philosophy comes from Egypt.[33]

It is clear that the Greek philosophical mentality was unique, but it did not spring into existence *ex nihilo*. Though based on traditional Greek elements, it was made explicit by new concepts derived from Egypt. For example, the following philosophical concepts, used extensively by the Greeks, find initial foundations in Egyptian thought: ta onta (τὰ ὄντα)—being; arche (ἀρχή)—beginning; phusis (φύσις)—process of becoming; cosmos (κόσμος)—the totality of what exists; aletheia (ἀλήθεια)—truth; sophoi (σοφόι)—wise men; nous (νοῦς)—mind. These new concepts were fully developed in Egyptian literature at the time when they first emerged in Greece, animating the Greek mind.[34]

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[33] Richard Hooker, "Greek Philosophy," <http://www.wsu.edu:8001/~dee/GREECE/PRESOC.HTM>, accessed June 29, 2006.

[34] Wim van den Dungen, "Hermes the Egyptian: The Impact of Ancient Egypt on Greek Philosophy against Hellenocentrism, against Afrocentrism, in defense of the Greek Miracle," Thinking Philosophy, <http://www.sofiatopia.org/maat/hermes1.htm#3.1a>, accessed July 5, 2006.

Concerning the significant impact of Egyptian culture on future Greek and Western philosophy and education, Eby and Arrowood conclude, perhaps with some exaggeration:

> Here [in Egypt], out of the increasing complexity of human experience, arose the first ideas of righteousness, truth, justice, moral distinctions of right and wrong, the idea of character, the operation of conscience . . . it became the birthplace of a great many things that make our own civilization what it is today . . . Through . . . the Greeks, Egyptian ideas were transmitted to the Western world.[35]

2.23 Hebrew

Unique among the pre-Greek cultures in the Mediterranean region was that of the Semitic culture of the Hebrews (later called Israel, Jews). This former nomadic civilization became a key cultural contributor in the area linking Asia and Africa, Mesopotamia and Egypt. Not only did it function as a bridge between these two river civilizations, it succeeded in producing its own philosophical innovations that were used by the Greeks directly and indirectly in their intellectual development.[36] A Hebrew-Greek cultural interface would have occurred quite naturally in the Mediterranean world, especially during the strong Solomonic kingdom era (circa 900 B.C.) and more directly after the *diaspora* of the Jews following their defeat and dispersion after the Assyrian invasion of Israel in the eighth century and the

[35] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 36-7. See also their extensive chapter on Egyptian education, pp. 36-107. For a wider view of non-Western influences on the Greeks, see Walter Burkert's significant study, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[36] Refer to the lecture series by Timothy B. Shutt, *Foundations of Western Thought: Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans* (New York: Barnes & Noble Audio, 2004).

Babylonian invasion of Judea in the seventh-sixth century, resulting in Jewish communities all across the region. The Hebrew contribution to Western thought, of course, has further implications later in history, providing the seedbed out of which both Christianity and Islam grew, both of which will interact in positive and negative ways with Greek philosophical development in later centuries.

We can summarize the unique contributions of Hebrew thought using the following categories:

Language. Perhaps the most important reason for the success of the Greeks to later philosophical growth in the Western world was their ability to manipulate written language. The Attic dialect of the classical Greek writers was a precise language that allowed for intricacies of thought and argument to be laid out for dialogical inquiry and critique.

> Their language played a large part in their intellectual development. From early times it exhibited a wonderful richness and flexibility. Its descriptive adjectives, complex declensions of nouns, and elaborate conjugations of verbs, and fine difference in tenses, all indicate an unconscious appreciation of the logical relations of thought never equaled by any other people.[37]

Eby and Arrowood go on to note,

> The Greeks were the first people to move up the steep ascent from the lower level of pragmatic and conventional intelligence to the higher level of critical judgment. In connection with the progress of thought, during the fifth century B.C. a passion for accuracy and beauty of expression seized them. Up to this time, their language had been on the one hand highly poetical and on the other practical, that is, concrete and emotional . . . They wrangled over points of law, the policies of the state, the meanings of the poets, the truths of theology and of moral precepts, and the nature of the world and of man. It was under

[37] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 178.

> such conditions that they first became conscious of the necessity for accuracy in the use of words and the analysis of language.[38]

The development of written language is traced to both the Mesopotamian and Egyptian cultures, but these groups were mired in a pictograph system of writing that was awkward and imprecise. The invention of an alphabet, enabling a vast array of words not possible in a pictograph system, developed first among Semitic tribes (which include the Phoenician). A simple alphabet of a couple of dozen letters could be learned by the average person as opposed to the thousands of symbols required in pictograph writing and only available to a few privileged scribes. The Greek language added letters to the Semitic alphabet representing vowels, giving it added precision over the non-vocalic system of the Hebrews.[39]

The impact of alphabetic language is hard to overestimate in the development of philosophy. First, accurate representation of thought can be expressed through words. Second, those words can be recorded for mutual dialogue with others, at different times and places. Third, critical analysis of words can be accomplished and reasonable discussions can be held based on an unchanging text.[40] Fourth, transmission of ideas between groups can happen easily and in a trustworthy manner.

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[38] Ibid., 480.

[39] Geoffrey C. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers* (Boston: Addison Wesley Publishing Company, 1997).

[40] Although Plato says in his *Phaedrus* that oral communication is superior to the written word, especially in the accuracy of the oral word over the written word, without Plato's written word, Western philosophy would have largely missed the impact of Plato's ideas. Certainly the written word can be misinterpreted in ways that the spoken word cannot, but the written word can be analyzed in ways the spoken word cannot.

Without a developed Greek language at hand, the influence Greek philosophers would have been minimized.[41]

History. The Hebrews developed a novel approach to history, understanding time from a teleological perspective. The typical cyclical pattern of history understood by most ancient societies (especially those built on river systems with recurrent flood and drought seasons), endlessly repeating itself, inhibits creativity and progress, and limits historical story to repetitious myths.[42] The Hebrew linear approach to history gave the Greeks another philosophical tool for their own understanding of history and of human and social development. "Since time is no longer cyclical but one-way and irreversible, personal history is now possible and an individual life can have value."[43]

Unity. While perhaps not unique to the Hebrews, the formula "God is One" indicates the strong Hebrew commitment to a unity within creation, showing that there is continuity in the universe. "From this insight will flow not only the integrating and universalist propensities of Western philosophy but even the

[41] "What does change as soon as philosophy appears on the scene is perspective and verbalization, the kind of questions asked. Previously religion had been defined by forms of behavior and by institutions; now it becomes a matter of the theories and thoughts of individual men who express themselves in writing, in the form of books addressed to a nascent reading public. These are texts of a sort that did not exist before in either form or content: the new is incommensurable with the old. Philosophy indeed begins with the prose book." Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 305.

[42] See Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyer, Betty Sue Flowers, eds., *The Power of Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 1988).

[43] Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels,* 94.

possibility of modern science . . . We do not live in a fragmented universe."[44] This view of unity does not however make God identical with creation. There is no materialistic monism in Hebrew thought. There is an inherent dualism between the eternal and the temporary, as we see in the pre-Socratic writings, but this dualism does not invade the sphere of purpose; there is continuity between God and the world, not division. As we will see, both Plato and Aristotle wrestle with the idea of dualism within a system that still has coherency.

Leisure. The fourth of the Ten Commandments given to the Hebrews institutionalized the idea of rest and reflection found in the concept of the Sabbath. The Hebrews were commanded to observe this gift for their own good and prosperity. This idea of leisure was more structured than we might suppose by today's definition; it was in fact a call to personal consideration of the eternal qualities of life and in so being was an educative experience.

> Israel being the first human society to so value education and the first to envision it as a universal pursuit—and a democratic obligation that those in power must safeguard on behalf of those in their employ. The connections to both freedom and creativity lie just beneath the surface of this commandment: leisure is appropriate to a free people . . . leisure is the necessary ground of creativity.[45]

Theology and ethics. The Hebrews' writings show that consideration of a relation with God cannot be divorced from relationships with people. The Old Testament prophets as well as the wisdom literature of the Hebrews are replete with examples that emphasize love for God is evidenced by love for one's neighbor. When

[44] Ibid., 156.

[45] Ibid., 144.

we hear Socrates later say, "the one who knows the good, will do the good," we hear echoes of the Hebrew connectedness of all of life.

Individualism. The use of the personal pronoun "I" is notably absent in ancient literature. Corporate identity overshadows the individual in most early societies. Most would say the first autobiography does not occur in literature until Augustine's *Confessions* in the late fifth century A.D. But in the Hebrew Scriptures we see the self reflecting "I" (for example in Book of Psalms) that becomes the hallmark of later Western thought.

Creativity. That a "new thing" can be conceived is a mainstay of Hebrew thought. The *ruach* or spirit of God can initiate life where there is death, hope where there is despair. The possibility of imagination is another of the gifts of Hebrew thought.

Humanism. The Hebrews presented a unique portrait of humanity and their place in the world. While most ancient religions present the gods in opposition to human progress, the Hebrew God desires a personal relationship with His people. Humans are in fact created in the image of God himself. As such, there is a unique optimism fused into Hebrew anthropology that uplifts the ideas of each person and makes his or her life significant in the eyes of others.

Cahill summarizes this discussion of Hebrew cultural and intellectual influences: "Most of our best words, in fact—*new, adventure, surprise; unique,*

individual, person, vocation; time, history, future; freedom, progress, spirit; faith, hope, justice—are gifts of the Jews."[46]

To summarize this section, I have shown that the early Greek thinkers certainly did not work in a vacuum and that the intellectual context of the pre-Greek world is significant to the development of Greek thought. My thesis that non-Western influences affected the development and transmission of Greek sources of philosophy to the West begins here. While I will later move to the center of my discussion, involving the place of the Islamic Empire in Western thought, the influence of "eastern" minds is obvious already at this pre-classical period in Greek history. Thomas notes in her own research:

> The goal of this study suggests another characteristic of classical culture: the Greek tradition was in itself a product of growth and accretion. Elements worked into the final product described as classical Greek culture were drawn from a wide geographical area and a variety of contemporary cultures. In fact, for most of antiquity, civilization in Greece moved in close harmony with that of Near Eastern cultures; only in the centuries between 700 and 350 B.C. did Greek culture follow a distinctively different course . . . A failure to understand the close, enduring relationship of ancient Greece and the Near East yields an inaccurate view of more than 3000 years of history.[47]

But to balance this perspective and to move to the next section, Robert Hahn reminds us, "No doubt it [Greek philosophy] was partly an inherited wisdom, from

[46] Ibid., 241.

[47] Thomas, ed., *Paths from Ancient Greece,* 7.

Egypt, Babylon and elsewhere, but the archaic Greeks in Ionia transformed that vision and so also its meaning."[48] Bertrand Russell goes on to say, siding with Hahn,

> In all of history, nothing is so surprising or so difficult to account for as the sudden rise of civilization in Greece. Much of what makes civilization had already existed for thousands of years in Egypt and in Mesopotamia, and had spread thence to neighboring countries. But certain elements had been lacking until the Greeks supplied them. What they achieved in art and literature is familiar to everybody, but what they did in the purely intellectual realm is even more exceptional.[49]

Eby and Arrowood provide this concluding statement:

> By navigation the Greeks were quite early brought into intimate contact with the culture of Egypt, Phoenicia, and the progressive cities of Asia Minor. But at the same time they were sheltered from any influences that tended to submerge or stereotype their burgeoning civic and cultural life. Thus the Greek habitat made at once for stability and change, discipline and versatility, domesticity and travel.[50]

2.3 The Philosophical Priorities of Platonic and Aristotelian Thought

I have shown that there indeed was a rich context out of which Plato and Aristotle developed their ideas. This background is more than a mere introduction to my research, it serves to further my thesis that what we call Greek (or Western) thought has many subtexts that are not all necessarily European (or Western) in origin. But now it is time to focus on our two key thinkers, Plato and Aristotle, and to see how they uniquely used the intellectual context of their day to form something

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[48] Robert Hahn *Anaximander and the Architects: The Contributions of Egyptian and Greek Architectural Technologies to the Origins of Greek Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 166.

[49] Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: A Touchstone Book, Simon and Schuster, 1945), 3.

[50] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 162.

new and foundational, so much so that they are considered the founding fathers of Western philosophy.[51] For as much as Plato and Aristotle did not work out of a vacuum, neither did they merely transmit what was given to them. They were creative innovators of philosophical systems of thought that have served Western thought and its progenitors well for over 2000 years.

The classical age in Greek philosophy starts with the rather strange and enigmatic character of Socrates (470–399 B.C.), the street philosopher of Athens. What we know of Socrates comes entirely from his students, particularly Plato; none of his writings have survived the ages, if indeed he wrote at all. Some have even suggested Socrates never existed at all, that he was simply a rhetorical device used by Plato.[52] Socrates ran afoul of the ruling Sophist teachers because of his incessant questioning of both their educational method and content. He posited the reality of absolute Truth in the face of their rampant relativism and embarrassed them in the realm of moral integrity. For Socrates, mind and heart went together; the "good" mind was also the "good" person, since the idea of good was a unified concept that pervaded all facets of reality. Socrates differed substantially from the Sophists, building though on the work of other pre-Socratics, in both his metaphysics and epistemology. Socrates is most well-known for his critical thinking tools whereby he

[51] To justify this emphasis on the works of only two of the dozens of known Greek philosophers, Williams reminds us, "the preeminent status of Plato and Aristotle is both the cause and the effect of their work being exceptionally well preserved," Williams, "The Greek Tradition," *The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal,* ed. Finley, 213.

[52] I will assume that Socrates was a real personality. Gabriel Giannantoni, in his monumental work *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquia,,* 4 vols. (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1990-1991) has pulled together all sources of information regarding the life of Socrates and is the recognized authority for research about this topic.

carefully investigated issues in life, in opposition to the rhetorical tools that were the primary method of the Sophists. By claiming to be the "most ignorant of all," Socrates proved that he deserved the title of "wisest man in Athens," never shying away from close examination of his and other's presuppositions about reality.

When the Sophists had had enough of his "gadfly" approach to education, they accused him of treason. In his defense, recorded by Plato, he explains that the role of philosopher is to prod society to look inside itself and not be satisfied with a "status quo" depth of thought. He, through critical dialogue (later known as the Socratic Method), had hoped to improve Greece. But the Sophists saw his work as a danger to the young of Athens and to the health of the city itself. Socrates was declared guilty, given hemlock and died in prison, maintaining his ideas to the end but allowing the laws of his society to take authority over him.

Perhaps the most notable, and important, quote from Socrates that lies at the base of Western philosophy is his famous statement: "The unexamined life is not worth living." In this single sentence, we see intellectual clues that will remain part of the Western foundation for thinking—critical thinking, freedom, individualism, creativity, reason—picked up by both Plato and Aristotle in their own work in their own ways.[53]

Now moving directly to the works and ideas of Plato and Aristotle, I will not attempt to provide a full review of their philosophical systems. The secondary

[53] For a thorough discussion of the foundational position of Socrates in Greek philosophy, see F. M. Cornford, *Before and After Socrates* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

literature on these two thinkers is vast and well-known.[54] I will simply outline their key ideas, especially their metaphysical and epistemological perspectives, so that we can track them through the centuries to medieval Europe.[55] I will use these key ideas as a kind of philosophical "tracer," analyzing how these "Greek ways of thinking" moved through time and space to finally arrive firmly planted in Western tradition. As well, I will provide a complete list of the actual writings of both Plato and Aristotle, so I again can trace their use and translation down through the centuries between their creation in the fourth century B.C. to the time of Aquinas in the twelfth century A.D. My analysis will concern both textual transmission and ideological transmission of Plato's and Aristotle's works and ideas.

2.31 Plato

Plato (427–347 B.C.) was a student of Socrates, a writer of philosophical dialogues, and founder of the famous Academy in Athens. Plato lectured extensively at his Academy, and wrote on many philosophical topics, dealing especially in metaphysics, epistemology, politics, and ethics. Socrates is often a character in Plato's dialogues. How much of the content of any given dialogue is Socrates' point of view, and how much of it is Plato's, is heavily disputed, since Socrates apparently

[54] Let me simply list two standard references in regard to the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle: Richard Kraut, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Jonathan Barnes, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Oxford University Press publishes scholarly editions of Plato and Aristotle's Greek texts in the Oxford Classical Texts series, and some translations in the Clarendon Series. Harvard University Press publishes the hardbound series Loeb Classical Library, containing Plato and Aristotle's works in Greek, with English translations on facing pages.

[55] In my overview of Platonic and Aristotelian thought, I will use generally accepted ideas considered to be "common knowledge" and hence I will refrain from heavy footnoting in this section.

did not write anything of his own. However, Plato was no doubt strongly influenced by Socrates' teachings; many of the ideas presented, at least in his early works, were probably adaptations of Socrates' own ideas. Plato became a pupil of Socrates in his youth, and attended his master's trial. He was deeply affected by the treatment of Socrates; it is suggested that much of his ethical writing describes a society where similar injustices could not occur. During the twelve years following the death of Socrates, Plato traveled extensively in Italy, Sicily, Egypt, and Cyrene in a quest for knowledge. Plato was also deeply influenced by a number of prior philosophers, including the Pythagoreans, whose ideas of numerical harmony find clear echoes in Plato's concept of the Forms; Anaxagoras, who taught Socrates and who held that the mind, or reason, pervades everything; and Parmenides, who argued for the unity of all things and may have influenced Plato's concept of the soul.

After his return to Athens at age forty, Plato founded one of the earliest known organized schools in Western civilization, named the Academy. It operated until A.D.529, when it was effectively closed by Justinian I of the Byzantium Empire, who saw it as a pagan threat to the foundations of Christianity. Many important scholars were educated in the Academy, the most prominent being Aristotle himself.

Before we move into a brief examination of Plato's key ideas, Tarnas provides us with a much needed analytical perspective.

> To approach Plato, we must bear in mind his unsystematic, often tentative, and even ironic style of presenting his philosophy. We should bear in mind too the inevitable and no doubt often deliberative ambiguities inherent in his

> chosen literary mode, the dramatic dialogue. Finally, we must recall the range, variability, and growth of his thought over a period of some fifty years.[56]

Metaphysics. Plato's ideas have traditionally been interpreted as a form of metaphysical dualism, often referred to as Idealism (or perhaps more understandable, Idea-ism, since Plato is emphasizing ideas not ideals).[57] Plato's metaphysics divides reality into two distinct aspects: the intelligible world of "forms," and the perceptual world we see and sense around us. The perceptual world consists of imperfect copies of the intelligible forms or ideas. The forms are unchangeable and perfect, and are only comprehensible by the use of the intellect, a capacity of the mind that does not rely on sense perception. It is important to point out that Plato's doctrine states that Forms exist independently of whether or not we have seen evidence of its pure form in the material world.

In the *Republic* (Books VI and VII) Plato uses a number of metaphors to explain his metaphysical views: the metaphor of the sun, the well-known allegory of the cave, and most explicitly, the metaphor of the divided line. In the perceptual world, the particular objects we see around us bear only a dim resemblance to the more ultimately real forms of Plato's intelligible world; it is as if we are seeing shadows of cut-out shapes on the walls of a cave, which are mere representations of the reality outside the cave.

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[56] Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind,* 4.

[57] Although sometimes referred to as Realism in different contexts, related to Plato's insistence that there is indeed a metaphysical reality to discover. I will consistently use the word Idealism to refer to Plato's ideas while using Realism to depict Aristotle's work.

Plato's metaphysical views had many societal implications, especially related to the idea of an ideal state or government. Plato asserts that societies have a tripartite, pyramidal class structure corresponding to the appetite/spirit/reason structure of the individual soul (classified as Bronze, Silver, and Gold). Productive workers (the Bronze) correspond to the "appetite" part of the soul and account for the majority of a society's population. Protective warriors (the Silver) correspond to the "spirit" part of the soul and account for a smaller segment of the population than the workers. Governing rulers or Philosopher/Kings (the Gold) correspond to the "reason" part of the soul and are very few in number, but always plural.

According to this model, the principles of Athenian democracy (as it existed in his day) are rejected; only a few are capable of ruling. Instead of rhetoric and persuasion, Plato says reason and wisdom should govern. This does not equate to tyranny, despotism, or oligarchy, however. As Plato puts it:

> Until philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophize, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from evils . . . nor, I think, will the human race. (*Republic* 473c-d)

Plato describes these "philosopher-kings" as "those who love the sight of truth" (Republic 475c). A large part of the Republic then addresses how the educational system should be set up to produce these philosopher kings. For Plato, his

plans are never separated from practical reality. Philosophy, politics, ethics, and education are all part of a whole.[58]

Epistemology. Plato had influential opinions on the nature of knowledge and learning which he states in the *Meno.* Here he begins with the question of whether virtue can be taught, and proceeds to explain the concept of recollection or reminiscence, learning as the discovery of pre-existing knowledge. Plato stated that knowledge is essentially justified true belief, an influential belief which informed future developments in epistemology. Truth is to be discovered by looking inward not outward. The way to rediscover true ideas is to go beyond mere sensory exploration, which can be so fickle and untrustworthy, and to reach into one's mind through dialogue with other minds to move ever closer to absolute reality and good. Plato's use of dialectical discussion is fundamental to his epistemological system.

Our minds, not our senses, are the legitimate path to discovery. Plato's allegory of the cave shows that most people are content to stay in the world of shadows and half-truth, relying on their imperfect senses to reach out to "know" their world. But Plato pronounces that a few brave souls will make their way out of the cave of sensory illusion into the bright light of true knowledge. These brave truth-explorers will feel obligated to go back into the cave to encourage their peers to unchain themselves but, like Socrates experienced himself, few will let go of the comfort zone of the dark cave and will even resent the "teacher's" attempts to change their perceptions and assumptions.

[58] The same is true with Aristotle's philosophical system.

Plato argued with the Sophists over whether the intention of education should be of a general nature or of a technical nature. Plato's *Protagoras* presents his case for a general, liberal (i.e., liberating) kind of education. "The dialogue concludes with a victory for Socrates [Plato's mouthpiece], who argues that a genuinely and generally educated person will choose that which is the best . . . What Socrates accomplishes is the integration of knowledge and virtue."[59]

Tarnas provides this concise conclusion:

> The belief that the universe possesses and is governed according to a comprehensive regulating intelligence, and that this same intelligence is reflected in the human mind, rendering it capable of knowing the cosmic order, was one of the most characteristic and recurring principles in the central tradition of Hellenic thought. After Plato, the terms *logos* and *nous* were both regularly associated with philosophical conceptions of human knowledge and the universal order.[60]

2.32 Aristotle

Aristotle (384- 322 B.C.) was a student of Plato and his work is especially noted as both a synthesis and a rebuttal of Plato's philosophical ideas; Aristotle's position commonly labeled Realism. He lectured and wrote works on many subjects, including physics, poetry, logic, rhetoric, government, biology, and zoology. He created a second key educational institution in Athens, named the Lyceum, where he lectured extensively.[61]

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[59] Gutek, *Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 40.

[60] Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind,* 47.

[61] The Lyceum was a place of philosophical discussion and debate well before Aristotle founded his school there in 335 BC.

From age 18 to 37, Aristotle remained in Athens as a pupil of Plato and distinguished himself at the Academy. No doubt there were divergences of opinion between Plato, who took his stand on idealistic principles, and Aristotle, who showed a preference for the investigation of the facts and laws of the physical world. After the death of Plato, Aristotle was considered as the next head of the Academy, a position that was eventually awarded to Plato's nephew. He was summoned to Pella, the Macedonian capital, by King Philip II of Macedon, to become the tutor of Alexander the Great, who was then 13. Plutarch wrote that Aristotle not only imparted to Alexander knowledge of ethics and politics, but also of the most profound secrets of philosophy. Alexander provided Aristotle with ample means for the acquisition of books and the pursuit of his scientific investigation. About 335 BC, Alexander departed for his military campaigns, and Aristotle, who had served as an informal adviser since Alexander ascended the Macedonian throne, returned to Athens and taught at the Lyceum. It was also called the Peripatetic School because Aristotle preferred to discuss problems of philosophy with his pupils while walking around; the Greek for "walking around" is peripateo (περιπατέω). During the thirteen years (335–322) which he spent as teacher of the Lyceum, Aristotle composed most of his writings.

> The new School was no mere replica of that which Plato had left behind him. The Academy was devoted above all to mathematics and to speculative and political philosophy; the Lyceum had rather a tendency to biology and the natural sciences . . . [Aristotle went on to provide] a synthesis of knowledge and theory as no man would ever achieve again till Spencer's day, and even then not half so magnificently . . . If philosophy is the quest of unity, Aristotle

deserves the high name that twenty centuries gave him: *Ille Philosophus:* The Philosopher.[62]

Metaphysics. Aristotle's view of reality differed from Plato's in regard to the beginning point of that search for reality. While Plato placed value on the reality of ideas over the mere phenomenological world around him, Aristotle believed that a world of objects exist external to us and to our knowing them. "Through our senses, and our reason, human beings can come to know these objects and develop generalizations about their structure and function. Truth is a correspondence between the person's mind and external reality. Theoretical knowledge based on human observation is the best guide to human behavior."[63] Or, as Tarnas says, "With Aristotle, Plato was, as it were, brought down to earth."[64] While Plato's metaphysics shaped his epistemology, it could be said that Aristotle's epistemology shaped his metaphysics. "[Aristotle] is resolved to concern himself with the objective present, while Plato is absorbed in a subjective future."[65]

At the center of Aristotle's metaphysics is his ideas about matter and form. According to Aristotle, all reality is structured into matter and form. Everything we perceive through our senses is matter. But matter is always arranged according to form. Without matter, nothing exists. Without form, nothing is actualized. Matter has

[62] Durant, *The Story of Philosophy,* 53-56.

[63] Gutek, *Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 54.

[64] Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind,* 55.

[65] Durant, *The Story of Philosophy,* 60.

the property of potentiality, which means it can become something only when it takes on form.

Aristotle was interested in how matter moved from potentiality to actuality. He explained this change according to a theory of causation. The major kinds of causes come under the following divisions:

The Material Cause is the matter from which a particular object is made and from which a thing comes into existence from its parts, constituents, substratum or materials. The Formal Cause is the form the object has and what defines the object. The Efficient Cause is the agent that brought about the change from matter to form. The Final Cause is the purpose for which the action of the Efficient Cause was enacted. This final cause or *telos* is the purpose or end that something is supposed to serve.

For Aristotle, the movement from potentiality to actuality gives purpose to the universe. Everything is moving to an appropriate and meaningful end. For humans, that means that life is meaningful and can be influenced by rational choices. Aristotle then moves to two further categories related to causation: substance, the stable element, and accident, the variable element. These two qualities further define how change works on matter.

Related to his matter-form dualism, Aristotle wrote several works on ethics, the major one being the *Nicomachean Ethics.* Aristotle believed that ethical knowledge is not certain knowledge, like metaphysics, but general knowledge. Because it is a practical discipline rather than a theoretical one, he argued that in

order to become "good," one could not simply study what virtue is; one must actually do "good" or virtuous deeds. In order to do this, Aristotle first established what he meant by the word "virtuous." He started by stating that everything was done with some goal in mind and that goal was "good." The ultimate goal he called the Highest Good.

Aristotle thought that happiness could not be found entirely in pleasure or honor. He finds happiness by ascertaining the specific function of man. But what is this specific function? To determine this, Aristotle theorized that the soul had three parts: the Nutritive Soul (plants, animals, and humans), the Perceptive Soul (animals and humans) and the Rational Soul (humans only). Thus, a human's function is to do what makes it truly human, to be good at what sets it apart from everything else: the ability to utilize reason or *nous*. Aristotle believed that every ethical virtue is an intermediate condition between excess and deficiency (The Golden Mean). This does not mean Aristotle believed in moral relativism, however. He set certain emotions and certain actions as always wrong, regardless of the situation or the circumstances.

In his *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle focuses on the importance of always behaving virtuously and developing virtue rather than simply committing specific, isolated good actions. This can be contrasted with later Kantian ethics, in which the primary focus is on the intent of the actor, or Utilitarianism, where the consequences of the act are given moral value. Aristotle believed that *eudaimonia* (εὐδαιμονία; happiness) is the end of life and that as long as a person is striving for goodness, good deeds will result from that struggle, making the person virtuous and therefore happy.

Deciding how to make appropriate choices is guided by *phronesis* (φρονέσις), the virtue of practical wisdom.

Epistemology. Aristotle believed the mind has the ability to discover meaningful information from the environment through the senses. Just as his metaphysics is dualistic, so too is his epistemology.[66] It is divided between sensation and abstraction; sensation is the process of acquiring information; abstraction is the process of organizing and making sense of this information. So for Aristotle, in contrast to Plato, we come to know reality through our senses followed by the organization of that material by our mind. Aristotle is sometimes referred to as the "first scientist" because of his emphasis on sensory investigation and his wide array of work on science topics. But he was not an experimenter and did not use what we

[66] While both Plato and Aristotle are generally described as dualists, it is important to note that this descriptor can be misleading and variously used out of context, especially as it relates to the "universal-particular" discussion. Plato's dualism arises from his differentiation between forms and the perceived world. Aristotle position leads to dualism as one takes his matter-form metaphysical position seriously. But in Aristotle, some would say his dualism is less pronounced than Plato's because of his emphasis on actuality rather than potentially, his denial of *universalia ante rem* and his well-known "third man argument." (In fact, one could conclude that Aristotle espouses a monistic metaphysical framework by discounting matter apart from form.) What is important in both Plato and Aristotle, in spite of their dualistic frameworks, is their insistence that reality, though divided metaphysically, is still "connected" epistemologically. Plato's forms are still represented, however poorly, within the physical world and those forms help us understand our sense-based environment. Aristotle's matter is only known through its various forms and through the particulars of the world we are able to induct universals. It is this unity in reality that allows both Plato and Aristotle, taking different epistemological paths, to seek and to find Truth and to give the philosopher an opportunity to see the continuity of reality. Without this kind of promise of continuity, the enterprise of a coherent philosophy is lost and we become restricted entirely to theology on the one hand or science on the other. I especially like the emphasis of Jonathan Schaffer on this topic in his paper, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole,"(University of Massachusetts-Amherst) <http://people.umass.edu/schaffer/papers/Monism.pdf>, accessed July 8, 2007 and D. R. Khashaba's helpful article, "Dualism and Monism: A Note On Terminology," Let Us Philosophize <http://khashaba.blogspot.com/2007_02_01_archive.html>, accessed July 18, 2007.

today refer to as the "scientific method." Instead, using observations and reason, he reached rational conclusions.[67]

Aristotle's desire to categorize his observations of the world necessarily leads to defining a body of growing knowledge and "facts," which in turn must be mastered and passed on to future generations. While Aristotle agreed with Plato in a generalized education, his emphasis on bodies of knowledge eventually led to the growth of scientific specialization.

Aristotle is well known for his work in logic. Logic seems to have emerged from the dialectic tradition; the earlier philosophers used concepts like *reductio ad absurdum* as a standard, but never fully understanding its logical implications. Even Plato had difficulties with logic. Instead, he relied on his dialectic method. "The first great distinction of Aristotle is that almost without predecessors, almost entirely by his own hard thinking, he created a new science—Logic . . . Logic means, simply, the art and method of correct thinking."[68]

What we call today Aristotelian logic, Aristotle himself would have labeled analytics. The term logic he reserved for dialectics. The assumption behind his theory is that propositions are composed of two terms and that the reasoning process is, in turn, built from propositions.

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[67] Both Plato and Aristotle are ultimately concerned with metaphysics, using different starting points. Later the discipline of empiricism and the advent of the scientific age could look to Aristotle as part of its tradition, but only in a general way—empiricism moves the metaphysical question out of a primary position (or ignores the question completely) and replaces it with epistemology (for example, Dewey's work in pragmatism).

[68] Durant, *The Story of Philosophy,* 58.

The *term* represents something that is not true or false in its own right, as the words "man" or "mortal."

The *proposition* consists of two terms, in which one term (the "predicate") is affirmed or denied in relation to the other (the "subject"), and which is capable of truth or falsity. A proposition may be universal or particular, and it may be affirmative or negative. Thus there are just four kinds of propositions:

A-type: universal and affirmative ("All men are mortal").

I-type: Particular and affirmative ("Some men are philosophers").

E-type: Universal and negative ("No philosophers are rich").

O-type: Particular and negative ("Some men are not philosophers").

The *syllogism* is an inference in which one proposition (the "conclusion") follows of necessity from two others (the "premises"). In traditional Aristotelian logic or deductive reasoning, the conclusion is derived through previously known facts, the premises: if the premises are true, the conclusion must be true. This is as opposed to inductive reasoning, where the premises may predict a high probability of the conclusion, but do not guarantee that the conclusion is true.[69]

[69] While Aristotle's logic is dependent on deductive reasoning, his epistemology is obviously largely based on inductive reasoning, moving from particulars to universals, hence his close association with the sciences and his inherent truth of sensorial perception, in distinction to Plato. Note this important distinction on the chart on page 107. Kelley Ross explains Aristotle's inductive-deductive interplay well: "Aristotle thinks that knowledge begins with experience. We get to first principles through induction. But there is no certainty to the generalizations of induction. The 'Problem of Induction' is the question, How do we know when we have examined enough individual cases to make an inductive generalization. Usually we can't know. Thus, to get from the uncertainty of inductive generalizations to the certainty of self-evident first principles, there must be an intuitive 'leap,' through what Aristotle calls 'Mind.' This ties the system together. A deductive system from first principles (like Euclidean geometry) is then what Aristotle calls 'knowledge,'" Kelley L. Ross, "The Arch of Aristotelian Logic: The Doctrine of the Prior and Posterior Analytics," <http://www.friesian.com/arch.htm>, accessed July 19, 2007.

With this collective summary in mind, Durant provides an abridgment of the impact of Aristotle's work:

> We must not expect of Aristotle such literary brilliance as floods the pages of the dramatist-philosopher Plato . . . Instead of giving terms to literature, as Plato did, he built the terminology of science and philosophy; we can hardly speak of any science today without employing terms which he invented; they lie like fossils in the strata of our speech: *faculty, mean, maxim . . . category, energy, actuality, motive, end, principle, form*—these indispensable coins of philosophic thought were minted in his mind.[70]

Tarnas gives this conclusion about the place of Aristotle, especially in relation to Plato: "By replacing Plato's Ideas with universals . . . Aristotle turned Plato's ontology upside down . . . Plato's Ideas were for Aristotle an unnecessary idealist duplication of the real world of everyday experience, and a logical error."[71]

With this brief review of the essential philosophical positions of Plato and Aristotle, I have provided a summative and condensed chart of some of the differences between Platonic and Aristotelian thought.[72] That Plato and Aristotle have many common beginning points is obvious, but through extrapolation these two men's views can be placed on a continuum of opposites, as reflected in the following chart. The Realism column especially reflects that tradition as it has come to be understood, especially since the time of Aquinas. This chart will be used later in the dissertation as we explore how the ideas of Plato and Aristotle were transmitted to medieval Europe. As the chart shows, there is a certain balance and tension between

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[70] Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 56-7.

[71] Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind,* 57.

[72] Chart prepared by Randy Cloud for my Philosophy of Education course at MidAmerica Nazarene University, Spring 2006.

Plato and Aristotle, between "spiritual" intuition and empirical analysis, a philosophical duet beautifully portrayed in Raphael's painting, *The School of Athens.*[73] In the center of the painting stand the two Greek masters, Plato with his hand pointing to the heaven, reminding us of the transcendent qualities of reality, and Aristotle with his hand pointing outward, reminding us of its immanent features.[74]

This chart is followed by a listing of the works of both Plato and Aristotle. That section will be used later in the dissertation as we explore how the texts of these two men were transmitted to medieval Europe.

[73] See Appendix B.

[74] Yeats, in well-known poem *Among School Children,* described the difference between these two philosophers this way:

> Plato thought nature but a spume that plays
> Upon a ghostly paradigm of things;
> Soldier Aristotle played the taws
> Upon the bottom of a king of kings.

IDEALISM	REALISM
Socrates--Plato	Aristotle
Academy	Lyceum
the mind	the world
the laws of truth	the laws of nature
humanities classes	science classes
distrust your senses	trust your senses
there is more to life than what you can see	you have to deal with the world you see
Socratic method	scientific method
self directed	other directed
look in	look out
everything you know comes from inside	everything you know comes from outside
universals	particulars
group learning	individual learning
cooperation	competition
informal environment	formal environment
education	schooling
teacher is a guide	teacher is an expert
teacher brings information out of students	teacher puts information into students
personal	impersonal
more thinking	more looking
more talking	more writing
freedom	discipline
human basically good	humans basically bad
abstract goals	measurable goals
dialogue	tests
generalization	specialization
less technology based	more technology based
character	vocation
the library	the laboratory
ideas	facts
student is the key	subject matter is the key
right thinking	right answers
more hierarchical	less hierarchical
students more active	students more passive
conceptualization	organization
less materialistic	more materialistic
the good person	the informed person
Perennialism	Essentialism
nature, predisposition	nurture, environment
Augustine, Descartes, Hegel, Kant	Aquinas, Bacon, Locke

2.4 List of Works by Plato

Plato's writings were primarily dialogues, and scholars believe that most if not all of his writings have survived into modern times. They have been published in several formats over time. One ancient tradition regarding the arrangement of Plato's texts uses tetralogies. A tetralogy is a compound work that is made up of four distinct works, based on the Greek Attic theater, where tetralogies were designed for one sitting. This arrangement of Plato's works was composed in the early first century A.D. by Thrasyllus.

In the list below, works by Plato are marked (*) if there is not a consensus among scholars as to whether Plato is the actual author, and (**) if scholars generally agree that Plato is not the author of the work, and rather the work is composed by a student or school associated with Plato. Unmarked works are assumed to have been written by Plato.

Tetralogies:

I. Euthyphro, (The) Apology (of Socrates), Crito, Phaedo (modern title: Trial and Death of Socrates)

II. Cratylus, Theaetetus, Sophist, Statesman

III. Parmenides, Philebus, (The) Symposium, Phaedrus

IV. First Alcibiades*, Second Alcibiades**, Hipparchus **, (The) (Rival) Lovers**

V. Theages**, Charmides, Laches, Lysis

VI. Euthydemus, Protagoras, Gorgias, Meno

VII. (Greater) Hippias (major)*, (Lesser) Hippias (minor), Ion, Menexenus

VIII. Clitophon*, (The) Republic, Timaeus, Critias

IX. Minos**, (The) Laws, Epinomis**, Seventh Letter*.

The remaining works were transmitted under Plato's name, but most of them already considered spurious in antiquity, and were not included by Thrasyllus in his tetralogical arrangement. These works are labeled as Notheuomenoi ("spurious") or apocryphal: Axiochus, Definitions, Demodocus, Epigrams, Eryxias, Halcyon, On Justice, On Virtue, Sisyphus.

The generally agreed upon ordering of Plato's works among modern scholars is as follows:

Early Dialogues: Socrates is a key figure in all of these, and they are considered the most faithful representations of the historical Socrates. They are also called the Socratic dialogues. Most of them consist of Socrates discussing a subject, often an ethical one with a friend or with someone presumed to be an expert on the topic. The reader is often left to determine for himself or herself the conclusion Socrates intends to make. This period also includes several works surrounding the trial and execution of Socrates.

- Apology
- Crito
- Charmides
- Laches
- Lysis
- Euthyphro
- Menexenus
- Lesser Hippias
- Ion

The following are often considered transitional dialogues:

- Gorgias
- Protagoras
- Meno

Middle Dialogues: Later in the early dialogues Plato's Socrates begins supplying answers to some of the questions he asks. This is generally seen as the first appearance of Plato's own views. What becomes most prominent in the middle dialogues is the idea that knowledge comes from understanding the unchanging forms or essences, paired with the attempts to investigate such essences. The immortality of the soul, and specific doctrines about justice, truth, and beauty, begin appearing here. The "Symposium" and the "Republic" are considered the centerpieces of Plato's middle period.

- Euthydemus
- Cratylus
- Phaedo
- Phaedrus
- Symposium
- Republic
- Theaetetus
- Parmenides

Late Dialogues: In most of the remaining dialogues the theory of forms is either absent or at least appears under a different guise. Socrates is either absent or a minor figure in the discussion. An apparently new method for doing dialectic known, as "collection and division," is also featured, where questioners attempt to discern the similarities and differences among things in order to get a clear idea about what they in fact are. The late dialogues are also an important place to see Plato's mature

thought on most of the issues dealt with in the earlier dialogues. The later works are agreed to be difficult and challenging pieces of philosophy.

- Sophist
- Statesman
- Philebus
- Timaeus
- Critias
- Laws

2.5 List of Works by Aristotle

Though we are told that Aristotle wrote many elegant treatises (Cicero described his literary style as "a river of gold"), the originals have been lost. It is believed that we have access to about one-fifth of his total works. Of his dialogues, no more than fragments of these have survived. The works of Aristotle that still exist today are in treatise form and were, for the most part, unpublished texts. These were probably lecture notes or texts used by his students, and were almost certainly revised repeatedly over the course of years. As a result, these works tend to be eclectic, dense and difficult to read. The story of the original manuscripts of his treatises is described by Strabo in his *Geography* and by Plutarch in his *Parallel Lives, Sulla.* The manuscripts were left to Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus. From Theophrastus they went to Neleus of Scepsis; from Neleus to his heirs. Their descendants sold them to Apellicon of Teos, a famous book collector in Athens. When the Roman general Sulla occupied Athens in 86 BC, he carried off the library of Appellicon to Rome. Here

Aristotle's works were first published in 60 BC by the grammarian Tyrranio of Amisus and then by the philosopher Andronicus of Rhodes.

The "Corpus Aristotelicum" refers to the traditional ordering and categorization of the works of Aristotle, dating back to the second century A.D. The only major work of Aristotle's not in the Corpus Aristotelicum is the "Constitution of the Athenians." The extant works of Aristotle are broken down according to the five categories in the Corpus Aristotelicum. Although the works were all considered to be genuine until recently, not all of these works are considered genuine by modern scholars, but differ with respect to their connection to Aristotle, his associates and his views. Some are regarded as products of Aristotle's "school" and compiled under his direction or supervision. Other works may have been products of Aristotle's successors at the Lyceum. Still others acquired Aristotle's name through similarities in doctrine or content. Those works that are seriously disputed are marked with an asterisk (*). Note the Latin names in parenthesis; it is still common to list Aristotle's works with their Latin titles, even though he wrote and spoke in Greek, due no doubt to their later use in medieval Europe under the guidance of the Latin (Roman) Church.

Logical Writings

Organon (collected works on logic):

- Categories (Categoriae)
- On Interpretation (De Interpretatione)
- Prior Analytics (Analytica Priora)
- Posterior Analytics (Analytica Posteriora)
- Topics (Topica)
- On Sophistical Refutations (De Sophisticis Elenchis)

Physical and Scientific Writings

- Physics (Physica)
- On the Heavens (De Caelo)
- On Generation and Corruption (De Generatione et Corruptione)
- Meteorology (Meteorologica)
- On the Cosmos (De Mundo)*
- On the Soul (De Anima)
- Little Physical Treatises (Parva Naturalia):
  - On Sense and the Sensible (De Sensu et Sensibilibus)
  - On Memory and Reminiscence (De Memoria et Reminiscentia)
  - On Sleep and Sleeplessness (De Somno et Vigilia)
  - On Dreams (or De Insomniis)*
  - On Prophesying by Dreams (De Divinatione per Somnum)
  - On Longevity and Shortness of Life (De Longitudine et Brevitate Vitae)
  - On Youth and Old Age (On Life and Death) (De Juventute et Senectute, De Vita et Morte)
  - On Breathing (De Respiratione)
- On Breath (De Spiritu) *
- History of Animals (Historia Animalium)
- On the Parts of Animals (De Partibus Animalium)
- On the Gait of Animals (De Motu Animalium)
- On the Progression of Animals (De Incessu Animalium)
- On the Generation of Animals (De Generatione Animalium)
- On Colors (De Coloribus) *
- On Things Heard (De Audibilibus)
- Physiognomics (or Physiognomonica) *
- On Plants (De Plantis) *
- On Marvelous Things Heard (Mirabilibus Auscultationibus)*
- Mechanical Problems (Mechanica) *
- Problems (Problemata) *
- On Indivisible Lines (De Lineis Insecabilibus) *
- Situations and Names of Winds (Ventorum Situs) *
- On Melissus, Xenophanes and Gorgias (or MXG) *

Metaphysical Writings

- Metaphysics (Metaphysica)

Ethical Writings

- Nicomachean Ethics (Ethica Nicomachea)
- Great Ethics (Magna Moralia) *
- Eudemian Ethics (Ethica Eudemia)
- Virtues and Vices (De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus) *
- Politics (Politica)

Economics (Oeconomica)

Aesthetic Writings
Rhetoric (or Ars Rhetorica)
Rhetoric to Alexander (Rhetorica ad Alexandrum) *
Poetics (Ars Poetica)

A work outside the Corpus Aristotelicum
The Constitution of the Athenians (or Athenaion Politeia) *

To summarize the unique contribution of Plato and Aristotle to Western thought, Gutek reminds us:

> Greek philosopher-educators, especially in Athens, debated the nature of the good human being and the kind of education needed to develop him. For Athenian culture, the good man possessed and exhibited *arete,* defined as generalized excellence in all those characteristics that comprised human nature. For more cerebral theorists, such as Plato and his student Aristotle, the good man was most excellent in rationality, the power of reason that defined the human being."[75]

The Greeks did indeed develop a rational system of thought based on open dialogue, free inquiry, critical questioning, abstract thought, syllogistic logic, and developed writing, undeveloped in most of their predecessors and essential for their successors. This is truly what it means to "think in Greek ways." "It was an attempt to know. The Greeks . . . were peculiarly gripped by the passion to understand, to penetrate the uncertain flux of phenomena and grasp a deeper truth. And they established a dynamic tradition of critical thought to pursue that quest."[76]

> Inquisitiveness, desire for clearness of ideas, freedom from prejudices, readiness in adopting the new, passion for the dissimilar, open-mindedness, the comparative attitude of mind—all these characteristics which attend

[75] Gutek, *Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 34.

[76] Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind,* 69.

> intelligence of a higher order were present in unusual measure in the Greeks . . . Plato puts into the mouth of one of his interlocutors the statement, "Let us follow the argument whithersoever it may lead."[77]

Continuing within this Greek tradition, the significant work of Plato and Aristotle related to metaphysics—the one and the many, the eternal and the temporal, the real and the false, the unchangeable and the mutable—will provide a forum of investigation for Western thinkers until modern times. And in spite of their dualistic formulations about reality, they both keep in hand a unity within their metaphysical deliberations; seeing purpose and Truth as attainable goals in all realms of life. Their uniquely developed epistemologies—whether with Plato and the realm of mind or Aristotle and the realm of the senses—will provide Western thinkers a set of boundaries from which to launch their own theories of how the world is known.

Although Plato and Aristotle provided a systematic and written approach to the questions of metaphysics and epistemology, this by no means implies that any or all human thinkers do not have their own presuppositions about how the world works. The debt we owe to the early Greeks is not that they created new, never-before-thought ideas but that they took these ideas and explored their implications and questions in a critical and disciplined way. One of the great joys of philosophers today is to retrace the ground walked on by great thinkers of days gone by. The reason we are able to walk those same paths is the fact that all human minds are structured similarly, otherwise we could not share our insights with each other in comprehensible ways.

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[77] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval*, 177.

As Williams summarizes:

> We might say that the classical philosophers Plato and Aristotle are classics in the sense that it has been impossible, at least up to now, for philosophy not to want to make some living sense of these writers and relate its positions to theirs, if only by showing why they have to be rejected . . . But they might be said also to define a classical style of philosophy—meaning by that a philosophical, not a literary style. They are both associated with a grand, imperial, synoptic style of philosophy."[78]

2.6 What Do We Mean by "Western" Tradition?

Now that I have provided an overview of the essential elements of early Greek thought, especially that of Plato and Aristotle, I want to reconnect our discussion to the thesis at hand: How did the philosophical and educational themes of the classical Greek thinkers reach Western thought, and in what ways did it come into Western tradition? The real question before us at this stage of the analysis is to first ask ourselves the question: What do we mean by the term "Western"?

In a way, to try to define what we mean by "Western" culture or tradition may seem painfully obvious. The simple definition would say that those who are part of the Western perspective are those cultural groups who derived their identity from the European Renaissance which in turn laid claim to the cultural and intellectual heritage of the Roman Empire and the Greek civilization. But once we start to pull this definition apart it soon becomes apparent that to be part of the Western way of thinking is much harder to pin down than the simple definition above indicates.

[78] Williams, "Philosophy," in *The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal*, ed. M. I. Finley, 209.

The ancient Hellenic contrast between Greeks and "barbarians" divided the Greek-speaking culture of the Greek populations around the Mediterranean from the surrounding non-Greek cultures. When the great Greek historian Herodotus examined the Persian Wars of the fifth century B.C., he described a conflict between Europe and Asia. The terms "West" and "East" were not used by any Greek author to describe that conflict. In fact, an anachronistic application of those terms to that time period reveals a logical contradiction, given that, when the term West appeared, it was used to refer to groups in opposition to the Greeks and Greek-speaking culture.

When the Romans conquered Greece, the Roman Empire was effectively split into two halves, the western spoke Latin and the eastern spoke Greek. When Rome was finally defeated by northern barbaric invaders, this East-West division became more pronounced. The Roman Empire continued on in Constantinople but Europe became a fragmented map of competing kingdoms, using Latin occasionally but more often using the variety of local languages that were regionally influenced. Charlemagne succeeded in unifying parts of Europe under the banner of the Holy Roman Empire in 800, but the cultural connection to ancient Greece and even to the old Roman Empire was functionally severed.[79] In 1054, the split between the east and west vestiges of the old Roman Empire was finalized as the Latin Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church completely parted ways. To speak of the East was to speak of the lands of Greece, Turkey, and eastern Europe. To speak of the West was

[79] Note those influences that tended to pull Western Europe away from Greek and Roman civilization in Prudence Jones and Nigel Pennick's work, *A History of Pagan Europe* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, Inc., 1995).

to speak of the lands of Italy, France, Germany, and later of Scandinavia and the British Isles. Spain was added when the Muslims were finally removed in the thirteenth century.

This brief historical review reveals a plain fact. Today when we speak of the West, the modern countries of France, Germany, and England (and other western and central European nations), and the key colonial countries related to England (the United States, Canada, and Australia) are typically in mind. However, their direct connection to either ancient Greece or the Roman Empire is tenuous. The West, as defined here, neither speaks Greek nor carries Roman lineage. It speaks European dialects, primarily English, and its lineage is primarily northern European.[80] When we speak of the West today, we do not speak so much of a particular compass direction as we do of a particular mindset. What we can say is that Western culture has borrowed certain elements of Roman and Greek thought, focused through the lens of the Renaissance period but gathered through a mixture of perspectives prior to the Renaissance, which is, of course, one of the prime targets of my present research.

To define the idea of Western culture demands that its roots be carefully examined. If the West stakes claim to Greek and Roman ideas and ideals, the path of that claim should be of interest to Westerners. In reality, Western philosophy has taken a rather eclectic approach to the appropriation of both Greek and Roman culture. We have already seen a blending of Oriental and Occidental perspectives as we have looked into the roots of Greek thinking earlier in this chapter. To speak of a

[80] The barbarian groups that invaded the Western Roman Empire and which colonized Western Europe primarily originated from what today is known as Germany and Scandinavia, including the Goths (both Visigoths and Ostrogoths), Franks, Burgundians, Angles, and Saxons.

Western intellectual tradition requires a quite flexible definition, one that only partially is tied to Greek beginnings. It has borrowed certain ideas from the Greeks but others it has ignored. It does not use, nor has it always used, everything from its Greek ancestors. No one calls for the creation of Plato's utopian Republic today or finds Aristotle's scientific work very scientific. There are few today who would describe themselves as strict idealists or realists. Our ideas about democracy differ greatly from the Athenian democracy of the fifth century B.C. Yet within these philosophical systems, Western tradition has found tools and content worth learning and using.

The language of the Western tradition today is largely considered to be English, a borrower language *par excellence,* made up of a dizzying array of parent languages, making it one of the most difficult languages in the world to learn. What we find in Western intellectual tradition is also an eclectic collection of thoughts. From the Greeks? Of course. From a variety of other contributors? Yes. That the Greeks deserve primary attention is appropriate. That a recognition that the line linking Western tradition to the Greeks in nonlinear is also appropriate. "This path from antiquity is not a direct route through Rome into medieval Europe, since most first hand knowledge of Greece was lost to the west by the end of the sixth century A.D."[81] Once the Greek connection was established in Europe, even then Western tradition took these ideas in different directions. The French emphasized a Greek rational examination of nature. The Germans found a home in Greek reason as well as

[81] Thomas, ed., *Paths from Ancient Greece,* 3.

in Greek imagination and passion. The English took hold of the practical concerns of Greek thought. "The juncture of such individual paths as the British, German, and French cultural traditions has resulted in knowledge of classical Greece that is, in many ways, *more detailed than that possessed by the ancient Greeks themselves*" (emphasis added).[82] Interestingly, Western tradition is both less and more than the sum of early Greek thought.[83] As Thomas clearly points out,

> Aristotle argued that it was not enough to consider the form of the essence of things; proper investigation of nature must include the ends toward which things strive. That rule can serve as a maxim for the study of the classical tradition. In its own time and context the elements of Greek culture took on a definite form . . . Not so readily examined or understood are the ways in which the elements of classical culture were employed by the producers . . . the legacy of classical Hellas will be seen in later cultures, retained in part but never fully. What is as important as its retention is the analysis of its use by the heirs . . . As Tom Jones said in a lecture on the classical tradition in the spring of 1982, "It is not enough to be able merely to identify the elements that survived from the Classical period. Far more important is an understanding of the particular stimuli for new departures and creativity that have been provided in various periods by those meager fragments drifting ashore from the wreck of antiquity."[84]

Thomas goes on to present a theoretical schema that can help us assess the nature of the classical Greek influence on subsequent cultures.[85] She defines three categories of such influence that the Greeks have had on subsequent civilizations: configurative, cosmetic, and legitimizing. Societies that use Greek thought in a configurative way base their identity and culture firmly and indisputably within

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[82] Ibid., 4.

[83] See Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life 1500 to the Present* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000).

[84] Thomas, "The Legacy," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 26.

[85] Thomas, ed., *Paths from Ancient Greece*, 5.

Greek tradition. Societies that use Greek thought in a cosmetic way merely use Greek external reference points to provide texture for their own ideas. Societies that use Greek thought in a legitimizing way also create their own culture but use Greek thought to support and give authority to these ideas. It is not clear to which category Thomas assigns Western civilization, but she seems less inclined to put it in the configurative arena and more inclined to place it in the legitimizing and even cosmetic spheres. This reminds us that the use of the Greek legacy in Western thought is indeed eclectic and that Western tradition draws on other legacies, as well as infusing its own unique ideas into its borrowing of others' ideas.

The term "Western philosophy" was created in the last two hundred years as a way of emphasizing a Eurocentric perspective on thought and ideas. The early Greek philosophers would likely find such a classification irrelevant if not misleading. They knew the value of listening to voices that were different from their own. They understood that the search for understanding is a universal journey common to all humanity. The ancient philosophers would not have categorized philosophy based on a vague geographical term that is imprecise and rarely specifically tuned to any particular philosopher, nation, language, religion, or line of argument. Perhaps, in our growing world climate of multiculturalism, the meaning and use of the adjective Western may fall into disuse.

Can we then define in simple terms what the Western philosophical and educational tradition believes at its core? Perhaps we can build a general outline of this definition. It is built on individualism, freedom, critical thinking, logic, balance,

democracy, practicality, holism, reason; all connected to a unique Greek foundation, but all having evolved and developed and, importantly, been transformed from their original impetus. Western civilization is forever indebted to the Greeks but we are not Greek; we are more and we are less. This fact ties us back to my main thesis: without the influence of an "Eastern" society, namely Islam, Western society might have taken a very different course of development.

It may sound as if, in the preceding comments, I have tried to minimize both the impact of Greek thought on later European development as well as a definitive Western tradition of thinking. I actually affirm both of these propositions as factual and important. What I have done is to widen the discussion pertaining to Greek roots and Western thought. But let me summarize this chapter by defining the key element in both Greek and European philosophy that remains a unique feature of Western tradition. What sets the Greeks and Western thought apart from other systems of thought is its inherent ability to avoid the excesses of extreme subjectivism on the one hand and extreme dogmatic control on the other. Russell defines this enduring and identifying feature as "liberalism."

> Every community is exposed to two opposite dangers: ossification through too much discipline and reverence for tradition, on the one hand; on the other hand, dissolution, or subjection to foreign conquest, through the growth of an individualism and personal independence that makes cooperation impossible . . . The doctrine of liberalism is an attempt to escape from this endless oscillation. The essence of liberalism is an attempt to secure a social order not based on irrational dogma, and insuring stability without involving more restraints than are necessary for the preservation of the community.[86]

[86] Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy,* xxiii.

The ability and, more importantly, the desire to critically engage in open conversation about the nature of our world are the hallmarks of the classical Greek legacy and the overriding evidence of what it means to participate in the Western philosophical tradition.

Chapter 3

Hellenism, the Roman Empire, and the Propagation of Christianity

I am continuing my analysis of how the classical Greek philosophical tradition moved through history and among changing societies, from its general beginning point of Plato and Aristotle to medieval Western Europe. I will later move into my main historical topic of the Islamic Empire's place in this philosophical journey. However, in order to show how and why the Islamic Empire is indeed important to this discussion, the intervening historical bridge must be reviewed, connecting the historical dots, so to speak. Having developed the background of Greek thought by examining the context in which classical Greek philosophy flourished, and having briefly reinforced the significant place both Plato and Aristotle played within that intellectual tradition, this chapter will follow the path that Plato's and Aristotle's works and ideas took next during the early Hellenistic period, from the time of Alexander the Great's military conquests to the conquest of Greece by Rome, and the later Hellenistic period, from the Roman Empire up to the reign of Constantine.

It is difficult to find a consensus among scholars concerning the dating of the Hellenistic era. Some will limit this period to the time before the start of the Roman period and others will extend it to the time of Christian so-called suppression of Greek philosophy in the Byzantine period (A.D. 529 to be exact). For purposes of this dissertation, I will define the early Hellenistic period as beginning with the defeat of Athens by Philip of Macedonia (Alexander's father) in 338 B.C. and ending with the fall of the last Greek-related kingdom, the kingdom of Ptolemaic Egypt, in 31 B.C. I

will define the later Hellenistic period as beginning with the reign of the first Roman emperor, Octavian (Caesar Augustus) in 27 B.C. and concluding with Constantine's Edit of Milan in A.D. 313, proclaiming Christianity a legal religion and establishing a beginning point for what would be later termed the Byzantine Empire.[1]

We will find that during this time period, one that typically receives little attention in both philosophical and educational histories, the ebb and flow of Greek thinking and its migration to the West, is an intriguing story with many unexpected narrative turns. We will see how the work of Plato and Aristotle moved early into mainstream society and education among the Greeks. Then we will review the unlikely account of how Greek thought and philosophy traveled to the far reaches of the Mediterranean world, first through the military success of Alexander the Great and then through the willing accommodation of the Roman Empire. The pathway of Greek thinking into Western Europe seemed assured at this point. However, the fall of Rome and the rise of Christianity, both unlikely stories themselves, add some confusion and contention regarding the propagation of Greek sources of thinking. This chapter will end with a description of how Greek philosophical and educational foundations found themselves at an intermediate stage of continuity with Western

[1] See, for example, these standard works on the Hellenistic era: Helmut Koester, *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1995); Stanley M. Burstein, ed. and trans., *The Hellenistic Age from the Battle of Ipsos to the Death of Kleopatra VII* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); F. E. Peters, *The Harvest of Hellenism: A History of the Near East from Alexander the Great to the Triumph of Christianity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970); F. W. Walbank, et al., *The Hellenistic Age, Cambridge Ancient History* ,2nd ed., Vol. 7, Part 1 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

tradition; the next chapter will spell out how this intermediary stage changed direction dramatically and almost fatally for Western civilization.

3.1 Definition of Hellenism

Hellenism and Hellenization both are derived from the Greek word used by Greeks to describe their own ethnicity, Hellas (῾Ελλας), and both depict the spread of Greek thought, ideals, and practice throughout the eastern Mediterranean region following the conquests by Alexander the Great, notably through Persia and as far east as India.[2] Generally, when one nation conquers another, the stronger imposes its culture on the weaker. But when Alexander, a Macedonian,[3] invaded Greece, he adopted its superior culture, ideas, and even language. Alexander was intent, not only in building a world kingdom, but also on spreading this unique Greece culture to every region of his rapidly expanding empire. "'Hellenic'. . . carries a connotation, not so much of a diluted Hellenism, but rather of a Hellenism extended to non-Greeks, with the clash of cultures which that inevitably implies."[4]

After Alexander died in 323 (in Baghdad, interestingly), his kingdom was divided among three successors (the Diadochoi; διάδοχοι) roughly approximating Alexander's empire in Egypt, Asia, and Europe: the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt

[2] See Appendix C.

[3] Macedonia is today the northeast portion of modern Greece, but in ancient times, Macedonia and Greece were prominent but separate civilizations.

[4] F.W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World,* rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 14.

based at Alexandria; the Seleucid dynasty in Syria and Mesopotamia based at Antioch; the Antigonid dynasty in Macedon and central Greece. When these three Greek kingdoms were later overrun, by the Parthians in the East and the Romans in the West, Greek language and culture survived and thrived in many of these areas. "Greek culture alone had the capacity to embrace and interpret all the rest of the world; its spirit made a universal appeal through poetry, art, and philosophy."[5]

Hellenization was never a case of Greek ideas completely replacing the native ideas in the areas where Greek armies had assumed authority. While Greek culture and language became popular in many of these foreign cities, there was always a mixture of Greek and non-Greek thought, resulting in a kind of cultural amalgam; a resultant syncretism of ideas and a relatively free atmosphere for thought and philosophy. How far or in what direction this exchange of ideas went is a matter of some debate. For example, Eby and Arrowood note, when speaking of the library at Alexandria, "for the first time in history there intermingled freely and tolerantly scholars from many races and nations: Greeks, Hindoos [sic], Persians, Jews, Syrians, and Egyptians."[6] Burstein also clearly recognizes that, "beneath the superficial uniformity of hellenistic Greek life there were significant differences between the culture of the Aegean Greece and that of the new kingdoms of Asia and Egypt."[7] He further states that, "hellenistic civilization has often been described as the product of a

[5] Arthur Fairbanks, *A Handbook of Greek Religion* (New York: American Book Co., 1910), 273.

[6] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 475.

[7] Burstein, "The Greek Tradition: From Alexander to the End of Antiquity," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 31.

synthesis of Greek and ancient Near Eastern intellectual traditions, and undoubtedly some interchange of ideas took place in the new cosmopolitan cities of the hellenistic east such as Alexandria where Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, and Syrians . . . mingled."[8] However, Burstein departs from the more traditional picture of mutual cultural diffusion in his premise that this diffusion was primarily one-way: from Greek to non-Greek, but not the opposite way around.[9] Burstein correctly points out that not only was Greek the common language of these multicultural groups, they shared as well a reverence for the classical Greek thinkers, but in a way not known to the ancient Greeks themselves. These early non-Greek groups admired the Greek tradition "which both inspired and intimidated them, as models of perfection which could never again be equaled, let alone surpassed. In their own works they proclaimed their role as continuators of the Greek tradition by studding their writings with learned allusions to the masterpieces of the past while eschewing any attempt to rival them."[10]

Whether the path of Hellenism was one-way or two-way, either concept plays directly into my thesis, that Greek thought did intermingle with non-Greek thought and so created a variant form of classical Greek philosophy that captured the essence

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[8] Ibid., 36.

[9] See especially Arnaldo Momigliano's significant research in *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1975). He argues that in the Hellenistic period the Greeks, Romans, and Jews formed a special exclusive relationship and effectively established what was the normal horizon of Western civilization. He includes discussion of the role of the Persian intellect on Greek culture in his final chapter.

[10] Burstein, "The Greek Tradition: From Alexander to the End of Antiquity," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 31.

but not always the nuance of writers like Plato and Aristotle, and it was this kind of synthesis that moved on through Europe during the Middle Ages.[11] While the Greek culture was diffused over the entire eastern Mediterranean region, Greek culture was itself, in some regards, diffused by its contact with other cultures. Later these non-Greek societies would move from sheer awe to active engagement with the classical Greek philosophers from their own unique cultural perspectives.

A clear example of this diffusion process is found in the Greek language specifically. The classical Greek in which Plato and Aristotle composed their philosophical treatises and dialogues was written in the Attic dialect. But as Alexander's armies pressed ever further from the Greek home base, Attic Greek transposed into a more conversational dialect of the language, known as the Koine (κοινή) dialect, which means in Greek "common." Koine Greek became the *lingua franca* of not only the Greek Empire but also, later, of the Roman Empire.

Koine was more practical than it was academic, putting stress on clarity rather than eloquence. Its grammar was simplified, inflections were dropped or harmonized,

[11] Burstein comments that "the potential for the development of a civilization based on the synthesis of the best of the Greek and the non-Greek intellectual traditions, therefore, did exist, but it was not realized," (Burstein, "The Greek Tradition," 36). However, this did happen to some extent in the later Byzantine empire where Christianity, rooted in Judaism, did combine with Greek ideas to form creative syntheses, for example in neo-Platonism, and of course much later in the Scholastic era this same kind of synthesis was the heart of intellectual thought. Apparently, Burstein is limiting his view to the early Hellenistic period; my synthetic historical plan will give added time for Burstein's "potential" to become actualized. Burstein does say in another article ("The Hellenistic Period in World History," Online Scholarship Initiative, University of Virginia, The American Historical Association, <http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/BURSTEIN.HTM>, accessed July 24, 2007) that "to believe that this picture of the Hellenistic world as divided into two almost totally isolated societies, one Greek and the other non-Greek, is almost as great a distortion of ancient social reality as the idealistic image of a harmoniously mixed Hellenistic civilization" which helps place his prior comment in a more appropriate context.

and sentence construction made easier. Koine was the language of everyday life and not of philosophical books.[12]

> Hellenistic Greek began with Alexander's troops who came from all the regions of Greece. The troops, then produced a *leveling* influence . . . In a word, Greek became *simpler* . . . The language tended toward shorter, simpler sentences. Some of the syntactical subtleties were lost or at least declined. The language replaced the precision and refinement of classical Greek with greater explicitness."[13]

As Koine replaced Attic, Greek culture and philosophy itself experienced a leveling effect as its key ideas were addressed and contextualized into settings that had little direct knowledge of its classical roots. "The culture of Hellenistic Egypt and the Near and Middle East was a colonial culture, that is, a simplified version of Greek culture."[14] Walbank succinctly concludes, "The Greeks influenced barbarians, and barbarians Greeks. It is indeed in this clash and coming together of cultures that one of the main interests in the period lies."[15] The key to understanding the place and power of Hellenization was its elastic ability to transfer Greek ways of thinking to a broad population base of non-Greeks and to introduce key Greek writers, at least in

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[12] For discussions of the differences between Attic and Koine Greek see, A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934.); F. Wilbur Gingrich, "The Greek New Testament as a Landmark in the Course of Semantic Change," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 73 (1954): 189-196; Friedrich Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* translated and revised by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961.); E. H. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1927).

[13] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 17, 19.

[14] Burstein, "The Greek Tradition: From Alexander to the End of Antiquity," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 35.

[15] F.W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World*, 15.

basic form, to a wide and diverse audience, who in turn digested these ideas within their own cultures and traditions.

3.2 Competing Schools of Philosophy

It is important to remember that during and after the time of Plato and Aristotle, there were several competing schools of philosophy in existence in Greece, specifically in Athens, each adding to the definition of Hellenization. These schools established Athens as the educational hub of the Mediterranean region; students of many cultural backgrounds coveted the opportunity to travel to Greece to be trained by the *Scholarchs,* and Greek teachers were welcomed in regional cities. Besides the Sophists described in the last chapter, the following philosophical groups gathered many of their own disciples. Stoicism, founded around 308 B.C. by Zeno, held that all things, properties, and relations are governed by unvarying natural laws, and that the wise man should follow virtue alone, obtained through reason, remaining indifferent to the external world and to passion and emotion. Cynicism held that virtue is the only good, and stressed independence from societal conventions. Members of this group were highly critical (cynical) of the rest of society and its interests. Epicureanism, founded in 306 B.C., held that the goal of man should be a life of calm pleasure, regulated by mortality, temperance, serenity, and cultural development. Because Epicureanism affirmed the value of life and the values of the material world, it is often associated with "eating and drinking," and other sensuous pleasures. Skepticism, advocated by Arcesilaus who eventually took over as head of

Plato's Academy, affirmed that all knowledge must always be in question, and that inquiry must be a process of doubting.[16]

That there is some continuity between the Hellenistic philosophers and the so-called Socratic thinkers is clear.[17] Yet the early Hellenistic philosophers tended to focus on the abstract dimensions of reality and allowed the more practical matters of Plato and Aristotle to take a back seat. They were especially interested in ethical systems that would enable a person to find happiness and control in life. Plato's allegory of the cave concluded that the person who discovered the true essence of reality was obligated to go back to the cave and help his friends find the light. The early Hellenistic writers would question the necessity and purpose of this more practical and community oriented action. "Severing in this way the link that had bound classical philosophy to the *polis* inevitably tended to narrow the focus of Hellenistic philosophy and to eliminate from it that vigorous concern for the problems of everyday social and political life that strikes every reader of Plato and Aristotle."[18]

As well, the early Hellenistic period is often criticized for it slavish worship of past authority in philosophy. "What did the master say?" was of more concern than

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[16] Important recent texts on Hellenistic philosophy include Michael M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006); A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers, Volume 2: Greek and Latin Texts with Notes and Bibliography* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and F.W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World,* rev. ed. (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[17] For a good introduction to this subject of continuity see, A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Skeptics,* 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

[18] Burstein, "The Greek Tradition: From Alexander to the End of Antiquity," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 35.

"What do we think?" Old ideas were rehashed and stereotyped, often reduced to commentaries of previous thinkers. New ideas were sparse. However, there is another side to this evaluation. "These criticisms are largely justified, but they do not appraise at a fair value the critical editorial work accomplished by the scholars of the Alexandrian age. The sifting of texts, the culling out of errors, the work of accurate interpretation, and the study of language were indispensable accomplishments."[19]

An abbreviated list of the key Hellenistic writers prior to the time of Constantine includes the following Greek and Roman names:

Greek

- Menippus (3rd century B.C.)
- Archimedes (c. 287-212 B.C.)
- Chrysippus (280-207 B.C.)
- Carneades (214-129 B.C.)
- Philo of Larissa (160-80 B.C.)
- Posidonius (135-51 B.C.)
- Aenesidemus (1st century B.C.)
- Philo of Alexandria (30 B.C.- A.D. 45)
- Plutarch (A.D. 45-120)

Roman

- Cicero (106-43 B.C.)
- Lucretius (94-55 B.C.)
- Seneca (4 B.C.-A.D. 65)
- Musonius Rufus (A.D. 30-100)
- Epictetus (A.D. 55-135)
- Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121-180)
- Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215)
- Alcinous (2nd century A.D.)
- Sextus Empiricus (3rd century A.D.)

[19] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 497.

- Alexander of Aphrodisias (3rd century A.D.)
- Ammonius Saccas (3rd century A.D.)
- Plotinus (A.D. 205-270)
- Porphyry (A.D. 232-304)
- Iamblichus (A.D. 242-327)

These competing philosophical viewpoints held sway among portions of the Greek and Roman population during the Hellenistic period, but by the time of the Byzantine period, and certainly during the Middle and Modern ages, they were held by only a few, while the ideas of Plato and Aristotle survived. Burstein, commenting on this interesting insight, says,

> To understand the Greek contribution to the development of western civilization one must constantly be aware not only of the splendid intellectual and artistic achievements of the ancient Greeks but also of the fact that the Greek tradition that has had so great an impact on the development of European thought since the Renaissance comprises only a limited selection from the products of the multi-faceted creative activity of ancient Greece . . . at the same time that the cultural path laid down in the Classical period broadened into a complex network on intersecting highways, feeder roads and occasional *culs-de-sac* during the succeeding Hellenistic and Roman periods of Greek history, one particular branch was singled out for special maintenance and care so that it remained in use long after the system as whole fell into disrepair and was abandoned.[20]

The reasons for their literary collapse (but not necessarily of their key ideas) and conversely for Plato and Aristotle's work to continue are found in both pragmatic and ideological categories. First, Plato and Aristotle produced (including, for Aristotle, the production of his pupils) much of their work in written form. Their writings and ideas were well known and well circulated, and their popularity well established. Plato and Aristotle wrote in the Attic dialect. Later Hellenistic

[20] Burstein, "The Greek Tradition: From Alexander to the End of Antiquity," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 28.

philosophers used the current dialect, Koine, to compose their writings. As the ancient world began an important book-making shift, from papyrus scrolls to parchment codices,[21] a natural filtering process occurred. Decisions were required concerning which manuscripts would be put into the new codex format, all done of course by meticulous hand copying. Those manuscripts that did move into codex form tended to survive into later history, while those which remained in scroll form tended to be lost. One key deciding factor to whether a manuscript was deemed worthy of codex transmission during the Hellenistic period is the principle of Atticism. Atticism is the literary doctrine of this period that preferred the older and more academic Attic dialect to the more popular and current dialect of Koine. Since Plato and Aristotle wrote in the preferred dialect, their works moved into codices while the Hellenistic Koine writers' works generally did not. Atticism became a dominant literary force in the first century A. D. and continued through the Roman and Byzantine periods. "Since Greek education always emphasized the imitation of proper stylistic models as the best way to develop a good writing style, the prevalence of Atticism . . . would undoubtedly tend to result in the increasing neglect and eventual loss of much of Hellenistic literature."[22] Interestingly, while the Attic dialect helped Plato and Aristotle's works survive, it also made their work more inaccessible to readers who knew only Koine, especially the intricacies of the arguments. Later we

[21] A codex is equivalent to a modern book, featuring pages bound together in a spine rather than a scroll that required rolling back and forth to find a particular passage.

[22] Burstein, "The Greek Tradition: From Alexander to the End of Antiquity," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 41.

will see where the place of commentators helps fill this linguistic gap, while at the same time removing the student, by one layer, from the original texts.

Second, the metaphysical priorities that exist within Plato and Aristotle's systems, exhibiting absolute rather than relative positions on the existence of Truth, gave later Christian thinkers a positive handle. While the tendency of the Hellenistic philosophers to downplay political agendas and to uplift moral relativity and abstraction limited Christian interest in them, Plato and Aristotle's metaphysics, on the other hand, assisted the ability and desire of later Christian writers to pick up elements of classical Greek philosophy and to put them to use within their own philosophical systems. Dunn notes as well, "The Christian church drew on the works of Plato and Aristotle to defend its religious beliefs. In contrast . . . the cynics, stoics, skeptics, and epicureans were anathema to the Christian church because these philosophies affirmed the values of the physical or material world, denied or at least questioned the possibility of immortality, and did not support the Christian belief in a provident God."[23] Once Christianity had taken hold of the Roman Empire after Constantine, one key path for the ancient Greek ideas to remain relevant was through some kind of dialogue with Christian theologians.

Third, the prevalence of patrons within the Hellenistic period was of major importance to the survival of the classic Greek writers. That their works were transposed into codices is one thing; that these books were put into long-term safe-keeping is another. The tradition of Greek cultural patronage goes back to the fifth

[23] Dunn, *Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 16.

century, but notably we find in Alexander the Great a passion for keeping the Greek intellectual tradition alive. He built a new Greek city at the mouth of the Nile, named after himself, designed to promote Greek culture. Alexandria, under the supervision of Alexander's successor in Egypt, Ptolemy, soon rivaled Athens as the center of scholarly activity. It is here that we begin to see a new concept in the way cultural artifacts could be preserved: the great library of Alexandria and the Temple of the Muses—the Musaion or Museum, based to some degree on Aristotle's Lyceum. Here "distinguished scholars, supported by government stipends, pursued their studies in congenial surroundings. The royal library, whose collection is said to have ultimately reached 700,000 papyrus rolls and to have included copies of virtually every book written in Greek, offered unprecedented resources for scholarly research in every field of intellectual endeavor."[24] Similar libraries of the classic works of Greece were built in other key cities in the Hellenistic world: Pergamon and Tarsus (both in Asia Minor), the island of Rhodes, and Antioch (in Syria). While these libraries and museums would have preserved manuscripts from both the Attic and Koine periods, it is obvious from the discussion above that Attic-style writings would have received preferential treatment. "Their editorial and literary criticism preserved, for the future, editions of the ancient poets and other classical writers. The world today would know far less of the ancient literatures had it not been for the astonishing diligence and productive scholarship of these Alexandrian professors."[25]

[24] Burstein, "The Greek Tradition: From Alexander to the End of Antiquity," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* Thomas, ed,, 38.

[25] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 475.

3.3 The Roman Period

What I have termed the later Hellenistic era coincides with the dominance of the Roman Empire, first over the Greek territories along the eastern Mediterranean coast, then over Western Europe. The Roman Empire was the phase of ancient Roman civilization that succeeded the 500 year-old Roman Republic (510 B.C.—1st century B.C.). Several dates are commonly proposed to mark the transition from Republic to Empire, including the date of Julius Caesar's appointment as perpetual dictator (44 B.C.), the victory of Caesar's heir Octavian at the Battle of Actium (31 B.C.), and the Roman Senate's granting to Octavian the honorific title Augustus (27 B.C.). The Latin term *Imperium Romanum* indicates the part of the world under Roman rule. From the time of Augustus to the fall of the Western Empire, Rome dominated Western Eurasia and Northern Africa. Roman expansion began long before the state was changed into an Empire and reached its zenith under Emperor Trajan with the conquest of Dacia in A.D. 106. The transition from the early to the later Hellenistic period and from the partitioned Greek Empire to the Roman Empire was precipitated by the Battle of Actium when the kingdom of Ptolemaic Egypt and Mark Antony were utterly defeated by the Romans and Octavian (Caesar Augustus).

Prior to the full defeat of Greece by Rome, schools of Greek grammar and rhetoric were developed in Roman cities.[26]

[26] See Anthony Corbill, "Education in the Roman Republic: Creating Traditions," in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity,* ed. Yun Lee Too (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2001); Nanette R. Pascal, "The Legacy of Roman Education," *The Classical Journal* 79/4 (Apr. – May, 1984): 351-355; Michael Chiappetta, "Historiography and Roman Education," *History of Education Journal* 4/4 (Summer, 1953): 426-444.

> Rome was the mistress of the Mediterranean, and became a thoroughly cosmopolitan city. This period [before 132 B.C.] is frequently called 'the period of transition,' because it witnessed the development of Rome from an Italian state to the great power of the world, and the transformation of Roman culture from a local one, scarcely literary at all, into a cosmopolitan culture, employing the Latin language and Greek . . . scholarship."[27]

Like Alexander, but not to the same extent, the Romans admired Greek culture and thinking and allowed the process of Hellenization to proceed at its own pace throughout its growing territories. Whether or not Rome had a choice in this matter is debatable. But the Romans were wise in allowing Greek culture to continue its function as a conduit of trade and education rather than attempting to eradicate or supersede it.[28]

During the early Hellenistic period, appeal to Greek thinking tended to uplift the abstract and the oratorical elements of the classical age of the Greek masters. However, under Roman rule, Greek ideas were put to a more practical use, allowing the bureaucratic forces of Rome to do what they did best, organize, and control. This sharp contrast between abstract and practical thought can be said to have characterized what soon became a subtle (later a radical) division between the western and eastern portions of the Roman Empire. The Latin-speaking West was typically concerned with administrative affairs of the Empire while the Greek-speaking East was more interested in the "why" and "how" of life.[29]

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[27] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 516.

[28] See T.B. Jones' interesting essay on the intersection of Roman and Greek culture in his "Graecia Capta," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 53-75.

[29] It is important to remember that the Roman Empire was always a conjunction between its eastern and western regions; the East consistently more influenced by Hellenism and the Greek language

However, Rome adopted the same attitude toward Athens as the Macedonians had; they respected this unique city as a center of culture and ideas. Romans flocked to Athens to take advantage of the philosophical schools located there, as early as the third century B.C. Plutarch, writing in the second century B.C., records the visit of Greek philosophers and in Rome and their enthusiastic reception. Emperor Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 176 traveled to Athens himself, later establishing eight professorships, including two each in Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. Roman students were advised to study Greek before studying their native language of Latin; translation became a key educational activity. Education was so fused that the adjective "Greco-Roman" is often used for this period of education.[30]

Representative of Roman education in the period 100 B.C. to A.D. 100 are the writings and work of Marcus Quintilianus (A.D. 35-97), who served as a professor of rhetoric and oratory.[31] Quintilian, as he is commonly known, continued the Roman desire for a more practically based, utilitarian education over a more theoretically attuned education. However, in contrast to the intent of both Plato and Aristotle, "by the beginning of the Christian era, instruction had gotten completely away from life and action, and had lost its moral significance. This condition gave rise to the oft-

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generally, the west inspired more by Rome and Latin. As I will show in the next chapter, this east-west split had enormous implications about the way that Greek philosophy was transmitted into medieval Europe.

[30] See Appendix D.

[31] See Gutek's excellent survey of Quintilian in his *Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education*, 62-76.

repeated criticism of Seneca, 'we learn our lessons not for life but for the schools.'"[32] Here is Seneca's complete thought:

> We dull our fine edge by superfluous pursuits; these things make men clever, but not good. Wisdom is a plainer thing than that; nay it is clearly better to use literature for the improvement of the mind, instead of wasting philosophy itself as we waste other efforts on superfluous things. Just as we suffer from excess in all things, so we suffer for the lecture-room (Non vitae sed scholae discimus) . . . Betake yourself, therefore, to philosophy if you would be safe, untroubled, happy, in fine, if you wish to be,—and that is most important—free.[33]

L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson go on to state a concern about the state of classical education and the general educational climate of the second and third centuries. "The absence of works of literature and a decline in the monumental and epigraphic remains of the period is ominous, for it would be curious if this lack of creative energy and the general cultural disruption did not entail a corresponding apathy towards the reading and copying of the literature of the past."[34]

While Roman education in itself is a topic worthy of study, Rome's place in the continuity of Western thinking is best seen as a great transmitter of culture, especially Greek, but always with its own personality.[35] It could be said that Roman

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[32] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 511.

[33] R.M. Gummere, *Seneca ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales,* Vol. III (Cambridge, UK: Loeb Classical Library, 1925), 223, 255.

[34] L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[35] "The Romans did far more than adapt and pass on the products of the genius of other people. They added to the world's culture original contributions of their own . . . It is true that they owed a debt to the Hellenistic kingdoms . . . but . . . Rome so adapted and developed on the basis of her borrowings that the patterns which resulted were actually Roman creations," Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 518. This is the same thesis I will expose as we approach the role of the Islamic Empire in the development of Western Europe later in the dissertation.

philosophy added nothing of importance to the world's deposit of speculative thought, but the Roman Empire provided an avenue on which the cosmopolitan ideas of the Mediterranean region could make their way into western and northern Europe. While the deepest debt of Western civilization is owed intellectually perhaps to Greece, Rome certainly played the central role in the West's structure as well as a key transmitter of the Greek heritage. Rome provided later Europe, with its largely Celtic and Teutonic populations, with a foundation from which to appreciate and appropriate Greek ideals. As Rome passed on its acquired intellectual properties, it did so with its own unique stamp on them. "Roman higher scholarship was taken, initially, from Greece. But Rome clothed scholarship in the Latin tongue; its organization and aims were Roman. Thus adapted it lost much of its Greek character."[36]

One of the pathways for Greek thought into Europe was of necessity the Roman Empire, but as I will develop in the next chapter, this path became largely blocked after the fall of Rome in the fifth century and during the so-called Dark Ages. As I have just shown, this Greek heritage had passed through a Roman filter during the later Hellenistic period in the West and this Latin perspective will later shape the way in which Greek thought is reintroduced into Europe in the Middle Ages. Yet Rome laid an intellectual foundation that later Europe could find at least a tentative footing, an atmosphere of toleration of opinion and thought.[37] "Conqueror and teacher

[36]Ibid., 517-8.

[37] Eby and Arrowood add this comment, which will add to the significance of the next chapter's theme: "Greek philosophy as it was developed at Rome was one of the 'schoolmaster' which prepared the minds of the Romans for Christian theology, and the habit of listening to the rhetorician and philosopher helped the Christian missionary to a hearing," Ibid., 566.

of some of the most virile peoples in the world, Rome was able . . . to play a central role in the fusion of arts, forms of thought, and ways of feeling in all of Western Europe in the centuries during which she dominated its life."[38]

3.4 The Rise of Christianity

In the person of Jesus and in the propagation of his teachings among his disciples in the first half of the first century A.D., Christianity finds its beginning point and its stunning tenacity against insurmountable odds of survival. From its remarkably small beginnings in Judea, in the southeast corner of the Roman Empire, it became the official religion and guiding philosophy of the Empire within 400 years, in spite of numerous attempts to extinguish its message and messengers.[39] The central tenets of Christianity had their roots in Judaism[40] and Hebrew history, but took on creative elements as it grew up among Hellenistic overseers. The language of adolescent Christianity was Greek and its primary proponents after its initial founding in Jerusalem were largely Hellenized converts in Asia Minor and Greece. The Christian movement was furthered by Paul of Tarsus who through his missionary travels took Christianity to many areas of the Roman world. While Rome became,

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[38] Ibid., 517.

[39] The literature related to the rise of Christianity is, of course, vast. I will simply reference here two standard works as examples of this extensive bibliographic material: Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Volume 1: Beginnings to 1500,* rev. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco/ HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. 1953, 1975) and Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Volume 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press 1975).

[40] The fundamental difference between Judaism and Christianity was and is found in the person and nature of Jesus Christ—was he the Messiah of God or not? Christians answer yes, Jews no.

over time, the leading Christian city, Christianity's theological foundation was always in the eastern Greek-speaking regions of the Empire. All major Christian councils and most early major Christian thinkers were found in the East.

The impact of Christianity on Western thought cannot be overemphasized. As Eby and Arrowood point out, "In the progress of western education, Christianity has been the supreme influence. It is impossible to understand the institutions and culture of occidental civilization during the past two thousand years without this new ethical force."[41] That conclusion would not have seemed plausible if we were viewing Christianity's prospects from a first-century perspective. This religion was first hounded by the Jewish leadership, with imprisonments and occasional executions common in the first decades. Roman leadership tended to ignore Christianity at first, treating it much like it treated Judaism, a *religio licta,* or legal sect—permission to follow one's own religion in the Roman Empire was granted as long as that religion did not interfere with Roman authority. The first concerted backlash against Christianity is thought to have been the persecution that arose from Nero's false accusation of Christian guilt in the fire that destroyed a portion of Rome in the 60s. From this time until Constantine, Christianity was treated as an illegal religion and, though sporadic, official persecution of Christianity generally increased over the next two centuries. The worst persecution was under Diocletian, emperor from 303 to 311.

Instead of Christianity declining during these troubled times, it actually multiplied. The early Church Father Tertullian is legendary for his more than

[41] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 578.

predictive quote in the early 200s: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Some estimates state that as much as 10% of the Roman Empire was Christian by the early 300s.[42] By 313, Emperor Constantine had decided that Christianity could be a partner rather than an enemy of the state. In the Edit of Milan,[43] Christianity was granted legal status. By 379, under the rule of Theodosius I, Christianity became the official religion of the empire, and now "pagan" religions were persecuted.[44]

While Christianity itself is rooted firmly in the life of Jesus and the writings of both the Old and New Testaments, this religion has often intersected with the discipline of philosophy. In the history of Christian theology, philosophy has sometimes been seen as a natural complement to theological reflection, while at other times the advocates for the two disciplines have regarded each other as mortal enemies.

Some early Christians rejected any merger between Christianity and philosophy. The conflict between the two modes of thought is recorded in scripture, in Paul's encounters with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens,[45] his diatribe

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[42] Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco/HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1997; originally published by Princeton University Press, 1996), 7.

[43] The Edit of Milan represents one of the most significant and least predictable turning points in Western civilization. The entire course of the Roman Empire and Europe with it was forever changed by this imperial dictum.

[44] See Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians: Religion and the Religious Life from the Second to the Fourth Century* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco/HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1986).

[45] Acts 17.

against Greek philosophy in his letter to Corinth (the wisdom of the Greeks compared to the foolishness of God),[46] and his warning against philosophy to two Asian (Minor) churches.[47] Later, the church father, Tertullian (160–225) declared, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" to show that Greek philosophy has nothing to do with Christianity and any intrusion of secular philosophical reason into theological reflection was out of order. This hostile reaction toward Greek philosophy happened, not accidentally, more often in the West than the East. The West saw in speculative Greek philosophy an enemy of clear practical thinking and living. In addition, the western Church Fathers believed that the "fall of humanity" had perverted human reasoning to such an extent that it could not be trusted. Greek philosophy distorted truth rather than uncovering it. The following lengthy quote from Tertullian shows the western Christian mind at work, and later (see next chapter) a similar mind-set would influence parts of eastern Christianity as well.

> These are "the doctrines" of men and "of demons" produced for itching ears of the spirit of this world's wisdom: this the Lord called "foolishness," and "chose the foolish things of the world" to confound even philosophy itself. For it (philosophy) is that which is the material of the world's wisdom, the rash interpreter of the nature and the dispensation of God. Indeed heresies are themselves instigated by philosophy. From this source came the Aeons, and I know not what infinite forms, and the trinity of man in the system of Valentinus, who was of Plato's school. From the same source came Marcion's better god, with all his tranquility; he came of the Stoics. Then, again, the opinion that the soul dies is held by the Epicureans; while the denial of the restoration of the body is taken from the aggregate school of all the philosophers; also, when matter is made equal to God, then you have the teaching of Zeno; and when any doctrine is alleged touching a god of fire, then Heraclitus comes in. The same subject-matter is discussed over and over again by the heretics and the philosophers; the same arguments are involved.

[46] Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:17- 2:13, 3:19, 15:12-20.

[47] Ephesians 4; Colossians 2:8.

> Whence comes evil? Why is it permitted? What is the origin of man? and in what way does he come? Besides the question which Valentinus has very lately proposed—Whence comes God? Which he settles with the answer: From *enthymesis* and *ectroma.* Unhappy Aristotle! Who invented for these men dialectics, the art of building up and pulling down; an art so evasive in its propositions, so far-fetched in its conjectures, so harsh, in its arguments, so productive of contentions—embarrassing even to itself, retracting everything, and really treating of, in the sense of conclusively settling, nothing! Whence spring those "fables and endless genealogies," and "unprofitable questions," and "words which spread like a cancer?" From all these, when the apostle would restrain us, he expressly names philosophy as that which he would have us be on our guard against. Writing to the Colossians, he says, "See that no one beguile you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and contrary to the wisdom of the Holy Ghost." He had been at Athens, and had in his interviews (with its philosophers) become acquainted with that human wisdom which pretends to know the truth, whilst it only corrupts it, and is itself divided into its own manifold heresies, by the variety of its mutually repugnant sects. What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from "the porch of Solomon," who had himself taught that "the Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart." Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus, no inquisition after enjoying the gospel! With our faith, we desire no further belief. For this is our palmary faith, that there is nothing which we ought to believe besides.[48]

While Tertullian does not completely dismiss all non-Christian philosophy out of hand, "he clearly sees in philosophy as a comprehensive method and world view the most serious threat to Christian orthodoxy."[49]

However, the early eastern Church Fathers were generable favorable toward Greek philosophy as long as it did not contradict biblical teachings. Even Paul tips his

[48] Tertullian, "On Prescription Against Heretics," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers,* vol. 3, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2004, originally published by the Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1885), 246.

[49] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400*, 12.

hand that he has enjoyed a Greek education by occasionally quoting from Greek poets and philosophers.[50] Over time, as Christianity spread throughout the Hellenic world, an increasing number of church leaders were educated in Greek philosophy, leading to a fusion of the two modes of thought. Justin Martyr (c. 100–165), for example believed that God scattered "the seeds of his Logos [Word]" throughout the world before sending Jesus. Thus, Justin believed that the world had experienced some truths of God through philosophy even before Jesus came into the world. Justin also held that Christianity brought to fulfillment some of the insights of classical philosophy including that of Platonism.[51] Another church father, Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215), asserted that God gave philosophy to the Greeks in order to prepare them for the coming of Christ. Thus, Greek philosophy was not a competing worldview. According to Clement, Jesus was the fulfillment of philosophy. "Philosophy, he contended, was as much a revelation from God to the Greeks as the Old Testament was a revelation to the Jews."[52] Christian centers of learning, where Hellenic literature was recognized and used, were found in Alexandria, Caesarea, Antioch, Edessa, and Nisibis in the second-third century. (These last two cities were located on the border between Syria and Persia and will play a prominent role in the Byzantine period.) Origen (185–254), one of the most distinguished early Church

[50] For example, Acts 17:28; 1 Corinthians 15:28; Titus 1:12.

[51] For an interesting modern interpretation of this same reasoning see Jerry Dell Ehrlich, *Plato's Gift to Christianity: The Gentile Preparation for and the Making of the Christian Faith* (San Diego: Academic Christian Press, 2001).

[52] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 591.

Fathers, teaching in Alexandria and then in Caesarea, gave this advice to one of his students regarding the appropriate place of Greek philosophy:

> But I am anxious that you should devote all the strength of your natural good parts to Christianity for your end; and in order to this, I wish to ask you to extract from the philosophy of the Greeks what may serve as a course of study or a preparation for Christianity, and from geometry and astronomy what will serve to explain the sacred Scriptures, in order that all that the sons of the philosophers are wont to say about geometry and music, grammar, rhetoric, and astronomy, as fellow-helpers to philosophy, we may say about philosophy itself, in relation to Christianity.[53]

But even in the East, not all Christians were ready to merge Greek and Christian thought. Here again we will see this kind of attitude grow as we enter the Byzantine period in the next chapter. The *Apostolic Constitutions,* written in Syria sometime in the third century, condemned the use of pagan works in very clear terms:

> Abstain from all the heathen books. For what hast thou to do with such foreign discourses, or laws, or false prophets, which subvert the faith of the unstable? For what defect dost thou find in the law of God, that thou shouldest have recourse to those heathenish fables? For if thou hast a mind to read history, thou hast the books of the Kings; if books of wisdom or poetry, thou hast those of the Prophets, of Job, and the Proverbs, in which thou wilt find greater depth of sagacity than in all the heathen poets and sophisters, because these are the words of the Lord, the only wise God. If thou desirest something to sing, thou hast the Psalms; if the origin of things, thou hast Genesis; if laws and statutes, thou hast the glorious law of the Lord God. Do thou therefore utterly abstain from all strange and diabolical books.[54]

In addition to the place of Greek philosophy generally, Christian converts also had to decide specifically what kind of schools and what kind of education they wanted for themselves and for their children. Since official elementary Christian schools did not exist in this pre-Constantine era, the only choices were no education

[53] Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers,* vol. 4, 393.

[54] Ibid., vol. 7, 393.

or pagan education. With this dilemma in front of them, even Tertullian relented and advised Christians to take advantage of pagan schools as long as they did not compromise their salvation. The key aversion to these schools was not so much their philosophy as their intimate link to Greek/Roman religion. So a liberal education was desired but not at the expense of losing one's religious compass. The claim that Christians were obscurantist and little interested in a full cultural education during this period has many advocates but this claim is seriously flawed and overstated. Christianity from its beginning was an educative institution; however, it is true that its educational philosophy did have strong nonnegotiable presuppositions that impacted the way in which it interacted with non-Christian ideas. In some ways, it could be said that Christianity and Greek philosophy worked in unrelated, but not necessarily antagonistic, realms of how to understand reality, so comparisons of the two must be done thoughtfully. "Christianity does not stand in opposition to Greek philosophy as one doctrine against another doctrine. The natural, spontaneous form of Christianity is not written, didactic instruction . . . The teaching of Christ . . . stands in stark contrast to Hellenism by virtue of its total lack of reasoned, theoretical views concerning the universe and God."[55] This is neither a positive nor a negative evaluation, according to Emile Brehier. Christianity did offer the development of philosophical speculation tools with which to focus on that which is essentially subject, as opposed to the object-centered ontology of Aristotle, and a view of linear history and a resultant byproduct that can be called "progress." To say, for instance,

[55] Emile Brehier, *The Hellenistic & Roman Age, trans. by Wade Baskin* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1965), 218, 219.

that Christianity is "irrational" and therefore an enemy of philosophy indeed forces Christianity to respond to an irrelevant question. We will encounter Christian ties to Greek philosophy more fully in the next chapter as we consider the place and effects of the Byzantine Empire in the story of Western intellectual development.

I have described in the last chapter the beginnings of the two schools created and staffed by Plato (the Academy) and Aristotle (the Lyceum). I will now follow the progress of these two learning institutions through the Hellenistic period, remembering that one indication of the continued use of these two philosophers will be found, though not exclusively, through the life of their representative schools.[56]

3.5 Plato and the Academy through the Later Hellenistic Period

The history of the Plato's Academy is often divided into three periods, corresponding to different points of emphasis in its philosophical priorities. The first phase is known as the Old Academy. Plato was the first scholarch or leader of the Academy, keeping this active post for forty years. Plato appointed Speussipus (leadership dates: 347–339), his nephew, as his successor. (Afterward the scholarch was elected for life by the members of the school.) These early Academy scholarchs developed metaphysical and ethical systems inspired by the positive arguments contained in dialogues such as the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*. Speusippus especially studied the theory of logical classifications and the science of numbers. The third

[56] See H.G. Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World* (London/New York 2000) for a thorough review of classroom practices during this period.

scholarch was Xenocrates of Chalcedon (leadership dates: 339-314) who emphasized Platonic theology. The fourth scholarch was Polemon (or Polemo) of Athens (leadership dates: 314-269) who studied Plato's ethics. In 268, Crates briefly ruled the Academy; he was especially interested in ethics. Other students (students were sometimes called Academicians) who contributed to the fame of the Old Academy were Heraclides of Pontus, Eudoxus of Cnidus, Philippus of Opus, Crantor of Soloi (the first commentator of Plato's *Timaeus,* discussed later), and of course Aristotle himself (who was passed over as the scholarch after Plato and started his own school). The key to this early period of the Academy was its direct dependency and continuation of Plato's own ideas.

During the second Academy period (sometimes called the New Academy, sometimes called the Middle Academy), the school departed significantly from Plato's teachings and moved in the direction of Scepticism when Arcesilaus (315–240) became the sixth Academy scholarch. This change in the Academy's priorities and presuppositions represents a shift away from exegesis of Plato's doctrines and metaphysical speculation. Arcesilaus turned away from the system-building emphasis of the Old Academy and instead attacked the arguments of others. According to Cicero, the aim of such attacks was to produce *epoche,* or suspension of judgment. Arcesilaus held that only subjective certainty of the truth is available. Some have asked if this shift in the Academy was actually an abandonment of Plato's essential doctrines. Later, Carneades (214–129), perhaps the most prominent head of the

skeptical Academy, continued and expanded the "suspension of judgment" trend and proclaimed a theory of probability in contrast to a search for metaphysical realities.

The third Academy period (sometimes referred to as the New Academy or Middle Platonism[57]) begins after Philo of Larissa held the position of scholarch (leadership dates: 88-79) and the later leadership of Antiochus of Ascalon (130-69). The Academy tried to return to Plato's original teachings, while moderating the positions of Scepticism, allowing for the possibility of some absolute knowledge of reality. It restored, in come measure, the declining reputation of the Platonic school. The Academy was inclined toward eclecticism and often combined the most acceptable views of the Stoics, Sceptics, Platonists, and later even some of the Peripatetics (from Aristotle's school) as well. Many of their discussions centered around the interpretation of Plato's so-called Unwritten Doctrines, inspired by Pythagorean philosophy and involving an original, pair of first principles—the One and the Dyad—and how to understand this doctrine in light of the creation discussion given in the *Timaeus* dialogue. The most important Middle Platonists were Philo of Alexandria (30 B.C- A.D.45), Plutarch of Chaeronea (A.D. 45-125), and Albinus (fl. 149-157) whose handbook of Platonic philosophy is an interesting example of Middle Platonic eclecticism.

The thinkers comprising the philosophy referred to as Middle Platonism held widely varying and sometimes even divergent ideas. One might wonder why we would even call some of these thinkers Platonists at all. However, it must be

[57] See, for example, Brehier, *The Hellenistic & Roman Age,* chapters IV and V, and John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

remembered that Plato did not create a set of doctrines for his students and successors; his legacy is seen rather in a series of problems that have filled the minds of philosophers for over two millennia. Platonism, therefore, should not be thought of a simple explanation of Plato's doctrines, but rather as a creative engagement with Plato's texts and with certain doctrines handed down by the Academy as belonging to Plato.

The Academy developed in different cities and, notably, these offshoots were not always directly connected with the Athenian home of Plato's Academy. There is some discussion about whether the Academy was actually functioning from 85 BC until the 2nd century AD. After a lapse of some kind during the early Roman occupation, the Academy was "refounded" as a new institution by some outstanding Platonists of late antiquity who presented themselves as an uninterrupted tradition reaching back to Plato.[58] The last philosophers of the revived Academy taught in the 6th century and were drawn from various parts of the Hellenistic cultural world, suggesting a broad syncretism of the common culture. This takes us to the time of the closing of the Academy under Byzantine leadership, covered in the next chapter.

However, to continue our view of the flow of Platonic thought and to show that Platonic philosophy exhibited continuity during this period, I will end this section by introducing the neo-Platonic school which found it beginning point in the third

[58] Alan Cameron, "The Last Days of the Academy at Athens," in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 195/15 (1969): 7-29.

century.[59] Ammonius Saccas (d. c. 242) is regarded as the initiator of neo-Platonism. Plotinus (204–270) was his disciple for eleven years in his Alexandria school. The philosophers described as neo-Platonists did not found a school as much as attempt to preserve the teachings of Plato.[60] They regarded themselves as Platonists, pure and simple. Neo-Platonism is generally regarded as a religious philosophy, and neo-Platonists can be considered a type of mysticism. Neo-Platonism is a form of idealistic monism also called theistic monism (but not pantheism) even though for most, because it separated spirit and body so far apart, that it functionally became dualistic in practice.[61] Neo-Platonism is sometimes described as "the final form of Greek philosophy,"[62] and by others a last-ditch attempt "to revive and restate classical philosophy as a viable alternative to the Christian faith."[63] Neo-Platonism was especially attractive to certain Christian thinkers because it allowed them to use Plato's ideas as a way to talk about both the transcendence and immanence of God.

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[59] See G.R. Boys-Stones, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy. A Study of its Development from the Stoics to Origen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) as well as Chapter VIII "Neo-Platonism: Plotinus" in *From Aristotle to Plotinus,* ed. T.V. Smith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956).

[60] "The way was prepared for the neo-Platonic movement by Neo-Pythagoreans and Pythagorizing Platonists of the Middle Platonist period . . . The philosophy of the Neo-Pythagoreans is a blending of Pythagorean traditions with Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism. The Neo-Pythagoreans taught a highly spiritual notion of God, in accordance with which they interpreted the numbers and the Ideas of their predecessors to mean Ideas in the mind of God. They attached great importance to the spiritual element in human life, especially to mysticism," William Turner, "Neo-Pythagoreanism And Neo-Platonism," Jacques Maritain Center: History of Philosophy, < http://maritain.nd.edu/jmc/etext/hop20.htm>, accessed July 30, 2007.

[61] See Edward Moore, "Middle Platonism," The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/m/midplato.htm#H6>, accessed July 28, 2007.

[62] A. Hilary Armstrong and Henry J. Blumenthal, "Plato and Platonism," *Encyclopedia Britannica Macropedia*, vol. 25, 15th ed. (London: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 1992), 900.

[63] Colin Brown, *Christianity & Western Thought*, vol. 1 (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 87.

We will see that neo-Platonism was soon rejected by Christian orthodoxy because of its overemphasis on rationality and a troubling dualism between spirit and body.

As we move further into the Roman period and away from the classical Greek period, the decline of the uniquely humanistic Greek mindset is advancing. The reasons for this decline are diverse but ultimately that can be gathered together into one general problem: the inquisitive mind was replaced by the dogmatic mind, as is often the case in the decline of culture generally.

> The teachers of the day taught formulated statements, rules, definitions in place of direct experience with reality. In place of concrete experiences, memorizing was made to take the place of creative effort. They had too much reverence for ancient authorities and too little regard for their own abilities. This procedure indicated that Hellenism had exhausted its resources, and did not possess the power of inner regeneration."[64]

Actually, this high view of the classic philosophers did enable them to take on an air of immutability and allowed their works to pass generally unchanged and unimpeded through the Hellenistic period. The fact that they were seen as academically "untouchable" is a key fact to their longevity. However, with neo-Platonism there was one brave attempt to take the basic Platonic philosophical schema and to mold it into a slightly altered form. "Each generation produced fewer creative thinkers than the preceding one. During the first Christian centuries there were few great scholars in literature and science and only the Neoplatonists in philosophy."[65] Neo-Platonism was one of the few attempts to enliven the philosophical world of later Hellenism and represented a purposeful effort to

[64] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 513.

[65] Ibid., 512.

reinterpret the basic metaphysical and epistemological stance of Plato. It provides for us an important connecting path for the thought of Plato between the time of early Hellenism and the later Byzantine period.

In sum, the third period of Plato's Academy, the Middle Platonic period, that both recaptured the essence of Plato's original thought and added new energy to Platonism, giving it the ability to adapt to the next installment of Platonic thought, neo-Platonism, and facilitating its journey into Christian thought, in one form or other, during the Byzantine period.

3.6 Aristotle and the Lyceum through the Later Hellenistic Period

Aristotle joined Plato's Academy at age 17 in the year 367 B.C. He maintained a writing career through 343, when he moved to Macedonia to tutor Phillip's son Alexander. In 335, he returned to Athens and began attracting students, using a location named the Lyceum.[66] For nearly the remainder of his life, it was here that Aristotle lectured, wrote most of his philosophical treatises and dialogues, and systematically collected books for the one of the first libraries in European history. He lectured in the *peripatos*, a shaded walkway area. Later Aristotle's followers would be called the peripatetics, referencing Aristotle's place and style of lecture.[67] "Aristotle does not seem as much concerned to change the world. Plato's Academy

[66] See Burgess Laughlin's thorough discussion of the history of the Lyceum in *The Aristotle Adventure*, 22-52, as well as J.P. Lynch's standard work, *Aristotle's School: A Study of a Greek Educational Institution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

[67] R.W. Sharples, "The Peripatetic School," in the *Routledge History of Philosophy,* ed. D. J. Furley, Vol. 2: From Aristotle to Augustine (London: Routledge Publishing, 1997), 147-187.

was a revolutionary club, Aristotle's Lyceum was more like a university."[68] Toward the end of his life, he left the school under charges of impiety and died one year later in 322.

Theophrastus served as the second head of the school, to whom Aristotle's own library was bequeathed. When Theophrastus died, he gave instructions for his and Aristotle's library to be continued at the Lyceum, under the care of one of his students, Neleus. But Neleus moved back to Scepsis, in Asia Minor. The ancient historian Strabo tells us that Neleus, "bequeathed [the library] to his heirs, ordinary people, who kept the books locked up and not even carefully stored. But when they heard how zealously the Attalic [local] kings . . . were searching for books to build up the library in Pergamum, they hid their books underground in a kind of trench."[69]

From the time of Aristotle until 86 B.C., there was a continuous succession of philosophers in charge of the school in the Lyceum but the institution was seen by most as in decline, perhaps because Aristotle's literary works were not as easily accessible, perhaps the leadership was not as capable, perhaps negative eternal effects created distractions. But, according to Laughlin,

> the fundamental cause of the decline [of the school and] the study of Aristotle's work on logic was this: The philosophers and scholars in the school after Straton [third leader of the Lyceum, 285-269] did not *value* Aristotle's work . . . enough to advance it. They did not value it enough to study it. They did not value it enough even to preserve it for the next

[68] R.J. Kilcullen, "Lectures: Philosophy from Aristotle to Augustine," Macquarie University <http://www.humanities.mq.edu.au/Ockham/y67s10.html>, accessed July 29, 2007.

[69] Strabo, *Geography,* H.L. Jones, trans., Loeb Library (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1917-1933), Bk. 13, Ch. I, Sec. 54.

> generation . . . Within two generations, the school had become a dry riverbed.[70]

Straton's successors were not familiar with the full range of Aristotle's works and there existed no tightly systematized summary of Aristotle's philosophy. Students who attended the Lyceum often were even hostile to Aristotelianism. For almost 200 years Aristotle's own work was for all practical purposes largely unused, while his general ideas were discussed in only a nonsystematic way.[71] Regarding Aristotle's own library that had been buried and hidden, Strabo gives further comment:

> But much later [c. 100 B.C.], when the books had been damaged by moisture and moths, their descendents [Neleus' relatives] sold them to Apellicon of Teos for a large sum of money, both the books of Aristotle and those of Theophrastus. But Apellicon was a bibliophile rather than a philosopher; and therefore, seeking a restoration of the parts that had been eaten through, he made new copies of the text, filling up the gaps incorrectly, and published the books full of errors.[72]

Apparently, Aristotle's works were published, especially in the Athens area, during this period of recovery and the Lyceum was able to work again with his direct ideas, even if the copies of his books sometimes contained errors.

The school was sacked by Roman general Lucius Cornelius Sulla in 86 B.C., destroying much of the Lyceum and disrupting the life of the school considerably. Plutarch says Sulla, "seized for himself the library of Appellicon the Teian. This library contained most of the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus, of which good

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[70] Burgess Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure*, 36.

[71] For a snapshot of the travels of Aristotle's manuscripts see, Pamela M. Huby, "The Transmission of Aristotle's Writings and the Places Where Copies of His Works Existed," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 30 (1979): 241-257.

[72] Strabo, *Geography,* Bk. 13, Ch I, Sec. 54.

editions were not then in circulation."[73] Tyrannion later gained access to this library and examined and arranged the manuscripts, copies of which were received by Andronicus, who is often credited with the production of the first reliable edition of Aristotle; an edition that exercised an enormous influence on a return to Aristotle. Andronicus accomplished two actions that helped ensure passage of Aristotle's ideas to the future. First, he provided and published a moderately accurate edition of Aristotle's works. Second, he led a network of Aristotelian scholars, likely in Rome rather than in Athens. Various individual philosophers kept alive the Aristotelian tradition, both at the Lyceum and in other areas of the region, for example on the island of Rhodes. Notable among them is Alexander of Aphrodisias (c. A.D. 175-225), sometimes called the last true Aristotelian philosopher of the ancient world, more often called The Exegete (The Interpreter) and "the second Aristotle."[74] After Alexander, Aristotle's writings continued to be studied by some but few fully separated his ideas from Plato's philosophy. Most obviously, the neo-Platonic scholars of the third century often used portions of Aristotle's ideas, sometimes inappropriately, to support their own ideas and thus kept Aristotle in the philosophical picture at large. "Fortunately, their presentations of Aristotle's doctrines on logic were little corrupted by their Neo-Platonic views."[75] While it is true that the works we have today from Aristotle may have passed through many hands and minds in these

[73] Plutarch, *Fall of the Roman Republic* (modern title of a collection of six of Plutarch's *Lives,* including Sulla and Ciero), trans. Rex Warner, ed. Robin Seager (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), Sec. 26.

[74] J.P. Lynch, *Aristotle's School: A Study of a Greek Educational Institution,* 214.

[75] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 64.

early centuries, there is reasonable confidence that when we read Aristotle today, we are in the company of authentic Aristotelian thinking.

The Lyceum may have been re-founded later in the first century B.C. by Andronicus of Rhodes, but this is uncertain. By the second century A.D., the Lyceum was again a flourishing center of philosophical activity. The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius appointed teachers to all the main philosophical schools in Athens, including the Lyceum. The destruction of Athens in A.D. 267 probably ended this renaissance of scholarly activity. The work of Peripatetic philosophers continued elsewhere, but it is unclear whether they returned to the Lyceum. Nothing certain is known about the Lyceum during the remainder of the third through early sixth centuries A.D. Any remaining philosophical activity there would certainly have ended in A.D. 529, when the emperor Justinian closed the philosophical schools in Athens.

3.7 Ancient Textual Transmission and Early Greek Commentators

As we conclude this section of our historical analysis, it is important to remind ourselves how ancient manuscripts managed to survive down through the years of those early periods of human history that knew nothing of the modern book making methods or the printing press. Manuscript production was always done by hand, with its accompanying tedium and time-consuming labor. The common material for early books was papyrus rolls, which was a tenuous textile easily ruined or destroyed.[76] As old manuscripts literally wore out, new ones had to be produced, manually. We who

[76] The codex (book form) began replacing the papyrus roll beginning in the second century A.D.

today leisurely select a book from our library or purchase a work from an Internet site owe a great debt to those scribes who so meticulously copied original works, one careful letter at a time. These copies circulated and begat other copies which enabled the Greek tradition to move ever forward. Those who made these copies, whether the owners, the buyers, the borrowers, or professional copyists, maintained the stream of textual tradition on which we are so dependent today. We know none of the copyists by name, but we know their presence by virtue the works of Plato and Aristotle we read today.

To aid the reader in understanding more fully the text of a non-original manuscript, copyists, and editors began a system of margin notations. The *obelos* was a horizontal stroke placed in the margin just to the left of a verse, indicating that verse was considered spurious. The *diple* was an arrow or an X indicating a noteworthy point of content. The dotted *diple* referred to a different translation. The *asteriskos*, an X with four dots in the sign's spaces, marked a verse incorrectly repeated in another passage. The *asteriskos* in combination with an *obleos* marked the interpolation of verses from another passage. Finally, the *antisigma,* a sideways U, marked passages in which the order had been disturbed.[77] In the later Hellenistic period, the use of "subscriptions" allowed a copyist or editor to make a brief statement at the end of the manuscript indicating what kind of work he had done on the text. The practice of comparing manuscripts for accuracy likely happened in very early times, especially as book collecting and book selling began to flourish in the early Roman Empire period.

[77] The science of determining the most correct version of an ancient text is typically termed textual criticism and was especially prominent in the ancient world at the Library of Alexandria.

Beyond those who simply copied original works, one important mode of philosophical transmission and expression, from the Hellenistic period and on through the Middle Ages, was the philosophical commentary.[78] This activity presupposes the availability of Plato's and Aristotle's works in a form that suited the interests and needs of the time. Though meager, the information in our possession suggests that an intense editorial activity took place in the 1st century B.C.

During the Hellenistic period, Plato and Aristotle were regarded as philosophical authorities and their works were subject to intense study.[79] The primary purpose of a commentary was to explain a text. Typically, the text was divided into lemmata. A lemma is that which is quoted from a text in order to explain and interpret it. Sometimes the text was quoted in its entirety; other times only its beginning sentences were quoted. The lemma was always followed by an analysis of the text. The study of philosophers in the form of the commentary did not mean the cessation of scholarly philosophical thought. Quite the contrary; authors customarily used the commentary format not only to expound the works of Plato and Aristotle, but also as a vehicle for original philosophical theorizing. These commentaries were not always intended for publication, and were usually used by a small group of friends and students. We sometimes see the existence of two commentaries written in a different

[78] See R.K. Gibson, Kraus Shuttleworth, eds., *The Classical Commentary: Histories, Practices, Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Richard Sorabji, ed., *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD. A Sourcebook, Volume 1: Psychology. Volume 2: Physics. Volume 3: Logic and Metaphysics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[79] Andrea Falcon, "Commentators on Aristotle," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-commentators/>, accessed July 31, 2007.

format on the very same treatise by the same author, to be understood in the light of the fact that these commentaries were teaching tools. They were used to teach students with different skills and different levels of familiarity with the early Greek thinkers. Commentaries were written one after the other as part of a consolidated exegetical practice. Each generation of commentators read and interpreted Plato and Aristotle in the light of their own theoretical constructs, only to be replaced by the next generation of commentators, relying on their predecessors' work to a greater or lesser degree. The commentary eventually became the standard form of exegesis. Most of these commentaries have been lost today. One remarkable exception is Alexander of Aphrodisias. His commentaries survive because they were adopted as exemplary models by later commentators.

Alexander was a Peripatetic philosopher and commentator, active in the late second and early third century A.D.[80] He continued the tradition of writing commentaries on Aristotle's work established in the first century B.C. by Andronicus of Rhodes, the editor of Aristotle's "esoteric" writings. This tradition reflected a gradual revival of interest in Aristotle's philosophy, beginning in the late second century B.C., and helped to reestablish Aristotle as an active presence in philosophical debates in later antiquity. Aristotle's philosophy had fallen into neglect and disarray in the second generation after his death and remained in the shadow of the Stoics, Epicureans, and Academic skeptics throughout the early Hellenistic age. Andronicus' edition of what was to become the Corpus Aristotelicum consolidated

[80] Andrea Falcon, "Andronicus of Rhodes," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-commentators/supplement.html >, accessed July 31, 2007.

this renewed interest in Aristotle's philosophy. Alexander became known as the exemplary commentator throughout later antiquity and the Middle Ages. As stated above, he is often referred to simply as "the commentator," later sharing this title with Averroes. Alexander is not only regarded as the best of the ancient commentators but also as the last strictly Aristotelian one, whose aim was to present and defend Aristotle's philosophy as a coherent whole, well suited to engage contemporary philosophical discussions. We must keep in mind that in the eyes of "the commentator," Aristotle was an authority quite outside the common order. The doctrine of the Master was not the product of an ordinary human mind, subject to trial and error, but a unique achievement in a class of its own. As the translations of his work, first into Arabic and then into Latin, show, he continued to be treated as a leading authority and his work influenced the Aristotelian tradition immensely throughout late antiquity and the Middle Ages.[81]

The later Hellenistic commentators on Aristotle were members of the neo-Platonist schools and concentrated on documenting the substantial agreement between Platonic and Aristotelian thought, and to integrate Aristotle's work into their neo-Platonist philosophical system.[82] Their primary aim was no longer to recover and

[81] See P. Adamson, H. Baltussen, and M. Stone, eds., "Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries," in *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies,* Supplementary Volumes 83-84 (London, 2004). "Since we have concentrated so heavily on the Neoplatonization of Aristotle by those who wrote commentaries on him in late antiquity, the reader could easily rest under the impression that this was an irreversible process, leaving Aristotle with a Platonist veneer which was not to be stripped off till the twentieth century. That impression is false, but not entirely so," H. J. Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca: Cornell Universtiy Press,1996), 171.

[82] I. Hadot, "The Role of the Commentaries on Aristotle in the Teaching of Philosophy according to the Prefaces of the Neoplatonic Commentaries to the Categories," in *Aristotle and the Later Tradition,*

preserve Aristotle's thought for its own sake, but for the sake of finding agreement between Aristotle and Plato and presenting them as part of one and the same philosophical outlook. The study of Aristotle through close textual reading of his works continued, if not increased, in later Hellenism. So did the supply of commentaries on all the major works of Plato and Aristotle. Unlike Alexander of Aphrodisias, most of these commentators regarded themselves as Platonists. For them, Plato's philosophy was superior to all the systems of thought that came later. In addition, they believed that all these later systems started out as developments of Plato's philosophy. Aristotle was no exception to the rule. These commentators viewed Aristotle as a true descendant of Plato. This explains why, by reverting to Plato, they did not mean to reject Aristotle. On the contrary, they were convinced that Aristotle's philosophy could be integrated into a Platonic framework. The fact that Aristotle was often read before Plato was not neutral with respect to a certain view of the nature of logic. By this time, logic was regarded as a tool for philosophy. The Platonism of late Hellenism was so comprehensive as a system of thought that it could harbor Aristotle's philosophy. For most of these commentators, the disagreement on specific issues between Aristotle and Plato did not preclude harmony between the two philosophers on a deeper level. In reality, the reconciliation of Plato

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ed. H.J. Blumenthal and H. Robinson, Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, Supplementary Volume (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 175-189.

and Aristotle attempted by these commentators consisted in a use of Aristotle's works as a pre-requisite for the study of Plato's philosophy.[83]

Besides commentaries,[84] other helpful works were produced that added to the transmission of both text and ideas of Plato and Aristotle: prolegomena, introductions, explanatory notes, discussion outlines, abridgements, compilations (compendia), and paraphrases. However, the commentary remained the primary resource for this and the succeeding periods of history. Classical scholars today owe a great deal to this entire group because they preserved, even if second-hand and in fragmentary form, a considerable amount of literature that may have otherwise been lost. "Moreover they handed a life-line to following centuries by furnishing them with the tools for maintaining a basically classical education."[85]

As I have shown, the path of Plato and Aristotle through the Hellenistic period is complex and has many high and low points, as we might expect over this long, 600-year period of time. We have seen interest in the Greek classical philosophers stay in focus throughout the period, with these interesting focus points:

[83] The relationship between Plato and Aristotle has always been complex. Is Aristotle a logical extension of Plato, meaning that Plato must be read before Aristotle? Is Aristotle's logic a prerequisite to fully exegeting Plato, meaning Aristotle must be read before Plato? Or are both systems different enough that each stands alone? This set of questions will surround our discussion throughout the remainder of this dissertation. Because of this concern, the primacy of either Plato or Aristotle in philosophical discussion will ebb and flow depending on current historical priorities. "It helps to recognize that, in some periods of history, Plato's ideas and attitudes make obvious sense to thinking people, while in others, Aristotle's vision of the world seems far more realistic and inspiring," Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children,* 49.

[84] The term *scholia* is found in the research literature. Usually *scholia* refers to margin notes while commentary refers to a separate book of notes, often including the text or parts of the text.

[85] Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature,* 33.

- Plato and Aristotle have attained a maximal status where they are read and revered but seldom challenged or developed. This pattern of thinking leads to a kind of philosophic sterility by the later Hellenistic age. In fact, by the end of the Hellenistic period, cultural aptitude in general is on the decline.
- Hellenism has spread the ideology of Plato and Aristotle far and wide across the now Roman Empire. Greek philosophy is no stranger to the East or West, at least in basic outline. But this outflow has also allowed non-Greek ideas to mingle with Greek thought creating dynamic syncretistic variations of Plato and Aristotle, especially along geographical boundary zones.
- The advent of Christianity is the most influential aspect of how Greek thought will move forward in Western thought. This new religion approaches the Greek writers with caution, but it does approach them.
- With the Roman Empire still vital in A.D. 300, the advance of Greek thought to its western provinces seems assured. But two unanticipated events will change the course of Western civilization and the course of Greek philosophy to the West—the Fall of Rome and the domination (and split) of Christianity within the former Roman Empire.

Brehier summarizes for us the complex period we have just passed and points us to the next part of our historical analysis:

> Nothing is harder to disentangle than the history of intellectual thought during the first two centuries A.D., which witnessed the brief but brilliant

resurgence—under Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius—and subsequent disappearance of the great post-Aristotelian dogmatisms. The two centuries also witnessed the rebirth of Athenian idealism as it had existed during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. in the systems of Plato and Aristotle. Philo of Alexandria at the beginning of the first century A.D., Plutarch of Chaeronea (49-120), then the commentators on Plato, particularly Albinus (about the middle of the second century), and the commentators on Aristotle were its new exponents. At the same time a Pythagorean literature, impregnated with Platonism, came into existence. But alongside the great philosophical schools, how many new trends of thought took shape and penetrated the mainstream of civilization! The interpenetration of Hellenism and the Near East was continuous. The Alexandrian Jews, including Philo, were the first to make their influence felt. Then came Christianity, which produced simultaneously the great Gnostic systems and the apologists Justin, Tatian, and Irenaeus. Less conspicuous but no less active were the Eastern religions, particularly Mithraism, which had not only their forms of worship and mysteries but also comprehensive views of the world and of human destiny.[86]

[86] Brehier, *The Hellenistic & Roman Age*, 48.

Chapter 4

The Fall of Rome and the Byzantine Era

A synthetic history is necessarily a lengthy process; a brief review of where we started and how far we have come seems appropriate at this juncture, approximately halfway between the Greek classical period (our basic beginning point) and the time of the 12th century European renaissance (our basic ending point). The impetus for this study arises from questioning how the classical Greek philosophical/educational tradition made its way to Western Europe to become the foundation of the Western intellectual tradition. (My assumption has been, as outlined in Chapter 1, that philosophical streams of thought are historically-bound and geographically influenced.) If the path between these two points were direct and obvious, there would be little reason to pursue this analysis. However, a preliminary review of the literature indicates that this path was actually quite nonlinear and surprisingly coincidental, what might be termed an accident of history.

With that initial direction and promise of potential discovery, I started my study with the two most studied Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. I placed these two thinkers within their own Greek tradition, but I also did more than this. I offered evidence that confirms perhaps the obvious but often ignored fact that Greek philosophy did not arise in a vacuum; indeed the Greek philosophical tradition played the role of borrower and adapter from a variety of civilizations that lay to the south and east of Greece, a point important to my later thesis. With this necessary context in

place, I demonstrated that the Greek mind did indeed produce creative, new ideas, providing an overview of Plato's and Aristotle's related but divergent philosophical systems. I traced the flow of Greek philosophical thought through the early Hellenistic era, on through the early Roman period, concluding with the rise of the yet-illegal religion of Christianity and later Hellenism. From the time of Plato and Aristotle, in the fourth century B.C. until the end of the Hellenistic period (according to my preferred definition) in A.D. 313 and Constantine's Edit of Milan, the pathway of Plato and Aristotle toward modernity is unsurprisingly direct. These philosophical masters were studied and valued, to greater and lesser degrees, by Greeks and Romans alike. While the fate of their actual works was at times tenuous, their reputation and intellectual impact on cultural progress was generally steady through this period. Competing philosophies and creative synthesizers played their roles within this historical stream, but Platonic and Aristotelian ideas continued to be recognized as clearly significant in most educational settings.

With the fluidity of Hellenism and the domination Roman power, Greek ideas filled not only the Mediterranean basin but also regions in the Mesopotamian and European geopolitical arenas as well.[1] The path of Greek philosophy to our target area, Western Europe, appears to be, at this point in history, in reasonably good condition. The only concerns that a hypothetical futurist from this period of time might raise about the advance of Greek philosophy are: 1. The increasing military

[1] Because this research is so specifically tied to geographical domains, careful attention to geopolitical maps of the Western world is mandatory for both writer and reader to fully understand the shifting dynamics of philosophical continuity during the Middle Ages. Attention is given at this point to resources like the work of Rosamond McKitterick, *Atlas of the Medieval World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

instability on Rome's northwestern borders due to relentless pressure from Teutonic barbarians and 2. The curious rise of a new religion, Christianity, which seems to multiply in the face of concentrated effort to eliminate it and which has serious misgiving concerning so-called pagan philosophy. Those concerns will soon become nearly insurmountable obstacles to the progress of Greek philosophy.

In this chapter, I will trace the path of the work and ideas of Plato and Aristotle during this most unique of historical periods. I will follow the thought of these Greek thinkers in both the west and east portions of the Roman Empire and will show that their philosophical works, systems of thought, and the fact of critical inquiry itself will find themselves in jeopardy.[2] The next chapter will outline the unusual remedy to this double roadblock, namely the evolution of the Islamic Empire and its unlikely contact with Western Europe, with Greek philosophy in hand. This chapter then describes the heart of the problem associated with my research question. The following chapter will provide the solution to this question, which becomes the major thesis and premise of this dissertation.

4.1 The Roman Empire Divided

In order to understand the next section of Greek philosophical transmission, we must look closely at Roman history in the early fourth century, for it is here that we find a major transition point in European history with great consequences for its near and far status. The Roman Empire (*Imperium Romanum*), beginning officially in

[2] R.R. Bolgar provides a concise review of this same topic in essay, "The Greek Legacy," in *The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal,* ed. M.I. Finley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 427-472.

the years just prior to the birth of Christ, continued to grow at an accelerated pace, reaching its zenith in the reign of Trajan in the early A.D. 100s with the conquest of Dacia (roughly modern Romania). At the peak of their territorial conquest, Rome controlled the entire Mediterranean basin, including Asia Minor, Palestine and even, briefly, Mesopotamia in the east, North Africa to the south, the Iberian peninsula to the west, and as far to the northwest as the modern countries of France and England. Hadrian's Wall across northern England still marks the northern limit of Rome's advance against the fierce Scots. The basic northern dividing line between Roman control and barbarian influence is roughly drawn by the Rhine and Danube rivers, which bisect Europe from the northwest to the southeast.[3] In the literary lilt of Edward Gibbon, the majesty and triumph of Rome are described in full color:

> In the second century of the Christian era, the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour. The gentle, but powerful, influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed or abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence. The Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government.[4]

Prior to the establishment of the Empire, the territories of the Roman Republic were divided among the "Second Triumvirate," composed of Octavian (later called Augustus), Mark Antony, and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. Antony received the provinces in the East: Achaea, Macedonia and Epirus (roughly modern Greece),

[3] See Appendix D.

[4] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: Volume 1* (New York: Everyman's Library, 1993), 1.

Bithynia, Pontus and Asia (roughly modern Turkey), Syria, Cyprus, and Cyrenaica. These lands had been conquered by Alexander the Great and, thus, much of the leadership in this region was of Greek/Macedonian origin. This whole region, especially the major cities, had largely assimilated Greek culture; Greek was the majority language of the East. Octavian, on the other hand, obtained the Roman provinces of the West: Italia (modern Italy), Gaul (modern France), Gallia Belgica (parts of modern Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg), and Hispania (modern Spain and Portugal). Lepidus received the minor province of Africa (roughly modern Tunisia), which Octavian soon took away. These western provinces were largely Latin-speaking.

After the defeat of Antony, Octavian controlled a united Roman Empire. While the Roman Empire featured many distinct cultures, all experienced gradual "Romanization." While the predominantly Greek culture of the East and the predominantly Latin culture of the West functioned effectively as an integrated whole, eventually political and military developments would realign and divide the Empire along these East/West cultural and linguistic lines. A brief review of how the Roman Empire split into two sections will be helpful at this point in order to show what impact this historical shift had on Western philosophical development.

As the Roman Empire expanded its political reach geographically, its most distant provinces, measured from its capitol in Rome, became less interested in subservience to the Romans and more eager to revolt and assume self-rule. Pressure from entities outside the Empire on its borders and even opportunistic Roman

generals added to these border challenges. By the third century, the Empire was faced with such a series of disputations that the Roman system faced near collapse. The 50-year period of time from 235-284 is commonly called the "Crisis of the Third Century" or sometimes simply the period of "military anarchy." In complete contrast to the *Pax Romana* of the first century, the third century saw both internal and external conflict, often bordering on civil war, due in great part to a lack of a systematized approach to the succession of Roman leadership. Between the years just mentioned, no fewer than 25 different emperors ruled Rome, providing an atmosphere of instability and chaos. This time of real crisis came to an end with the accession of emperor Diocletian in 284.

Diocletian's decisions regarding how the Empire should be managed played a most significant role in the later shape of Euro-Byzantine relations, the seeds of which he may have envisioned but whose full growth no one could have fully anticipated.[5] In 286, Diocletian recognized what had become painfully obvious—the Empire was too large to efficiently manage from one central leadership location. He created a new system of governance that in effect divided the Empire into two administrative halves, one a western "Latin" section, the other an eastern "Greek" section. Each section had its own leader, called an "Augustus" (in effect creating two co-equal Emperors) and two "vice-emperors" called "Caesars," who would move into the Augustus position when the current Augustus died or resigned. This group of four leaders, two in the West and two in the East, was affectionately known as the

[5] For a thorough discussion on this history-altering time period see the excellent research of Roger Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

Tetrarchy. While the Roman Senate remained in the traditional capitol of Rome, Diocletian, administering the eastern portion of the Empire, established a capitol in Nicomedia (in northwest Asia Minor) and Maximian, administering the western portion established a capital in Milan (in northern Italy). The system of the Tetrarchy quickly devolved into chaos again in 306, with an overabundance of claimants to the roles of Augusti and Caesars. Through a series of battles, Constantine emerged as victor of a reunified Empire. But the idea of a divided Empire persisted.

Constantine's decision in 324 to transform the ancient city of Byzantium[6] into his new capitol of the entire Roman Empire was the key to a new era of eastern influence and western diminution. Constantinople (literally, "Constantine's city") became the new capitol of the Roman Empire, the *Nova Roma.* Roman resources were consistently shifted toward the eastern portion of the Empire, leaving the western provinces increasingly vulnerable. The Empire was again divided into two administrative sections—by 395 and especially after 408—and the split by this point was, for all practical purposes, permanent. The eastern Roman Empire, which we will now begin referring to as the Byzantine Empire,[7] remained a viable entity until its

[6] Byzantium was an ancient Greek city, which, according to legend, was founded by Greek colonists in 667 B.C. and named after their king Byzas or Byzantas. The name "Byzantium" is a Latinization of the original name Byzantion. It was a key trading city due to its strategic location at the Black Sea's only entrance on the Bosporus Strait, which connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara, which, in turn, is connected by the Dardanelles to the Aegean Sea, and thereby to the Mediterranean Sea. It is here that Asia and Europe met.

[7] While Constantine I is sometimes hailed as the first Byzantine emperor, commonly Constantius II (337-361) who focused most of his power in the East, is often regarded as the first emperor of the Byzantine Empire, although the term "Byzantine Empire" was not used until the 19th century. While the Roman Empire yet retained two halves, this portion was simply known as the Eastern Roman Empire or, by its Western contemporaries, as the Empire of the Greeks. To those who lived here, it was simply the Roman Empire and its emperors continued the unbroken succession of Roman leadership

capture by the Ottomans in 1453, and Constantinople was renamed Istanbul. The future of the western Roman Empire however was already tenuous at the time of the East/West administrative split and it would collapse in the next century completely.

For our purposes, the division of the Roman Empire into East and West partitions helps us understand a preliminary major difficulty in the transmission pathway of Greek philosophy to the West. As the Empire divided geographically, it also divided culturally. The strong Greek intellectual foundation found itself more and more isolated in the East and less and less attached to the West. This situation became more explicit in the 400s.

4.2 The Fall of Rome and the Barbarian Invasion of the West

As Roman power became more consolidated in the East, the West quickly showed its vulnerability to its old nemeses, the so-called barbarian[8] tribes to the north. Generally described as Teutonic, these tribes historically came from Scandinavian and Germanic homelands, on the northeast side of the Rhine and Danube rivers. Earlier Roman military leaders had tried, but unsuccessfully, to subdue these foreign forces. With the West weakened by a number of factors, not the least of which being its military potential, these barbarian tribes moved into Roman

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into the Middle Ages. See Cyril Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of the New Rome* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1981).

[8] The etymology of the word "barbarian," ultimately from Greek word βάρβαρος meant a non-Greek, someone whose first language was not Greek. The word is onomatopoeic, the sound of "bar-bar" representing the impression of random hubbub produced by hearing a spoken language that one cannot understand, similar to the expression, "blah, blah, blah." The word later took on a pejorative sense, meaning uncivilized or uncultured.

territory in increasing waves of conquest. The first Germanic tribe to move into Italy was the Visigoths (west Goths) who succeeded in doing something that had not happened in 800 years—the sacking of Rome. The *Caput mundi* ("Capital of the World"), *la Città Eterna* ("The Eternal City"), had been overrun by unworthy barbarians. The citizens of Rome and indeed the entire western Roman arena were shaken to its foundations.[9] The Christian writer Jerome summarizes the feelings of this period by Romans when he pens, "My voice sticks in my throat; and, as I dictate, sobs choke my utterance. The City which had taken the whole world was itself taken."[10]

The Visigoths moved on to occupy Spain. But they were followed by another barbarian group, the Vandals, who pillaged Rome in 455 and finally settled in the former Roman provinces of North Africa. The Ostrogoths (East Goths) came next, fully occupying Rome. In 476, the generally accepted date of the fall of the western Roman Empire, the last Roman emperor in the West, Romulus Augustus, was disposed and replaced by a German, Odoacer, followed by the more well-known Theodoric the Great, "king of the Ostrogoths." Other barbarian groups would overrun Western Europe and Great Britain, each grabbing a share of the former Empire—the Lombards, Burgundians, Franks, and Anglo-Saxons. Even the Mongol Huns, from Asia, tried to take a piece of the Roman corpse, but their stay was short. While the

[9] Bryan Ward-Perkins explains this crisis atmosphere well in *The Fall of Rome, And the End of Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[10] Jerome, Letter CXXVII (To Principia), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. 6, Second Series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2004, originally published by the Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1893), 257.

East would occasionally make attempts, some successful for periods of time, to retake portions of the West, the Roman Empire was never the same again, and the West was in essence orphaned from its long-held stately position.[11]

It is true that these new non-Roman leaders still relied heavily on Roman laws and structure. While there were periods of anarchy, these barbarians knew enough to keep organizational systems alive. As well, many of these barbarian tribes had been Christianized to some extent by earlier missionaries. While most of these invading tribes ascribed to a brand of Christianity called Arianism, a type of theological heresy that treats the nature of Jesus Christ inappropriately, they did accept most ethical tenets of the Gospels. Eventually many moved to a position of orthodoxy, recognizing the one steady force in all of this time of upheaval, namely the leadership of the bishop of Rome, who would later become known as the head of the Western, Latin Church, or the Pope. The period of time, beginning with the acceptance and domination of Christianity in the Roman Empire, instituted by Constantine (more on him later in the chapter) and continuing through the fall of the western Roman Empire and its resolution under Teutonic leadership cannot be understood apart from comprehending the close association of Church and State during these centuries.[12]

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[11] John Moorhead (*The Roman Empire Divided: The Post Roman World 400 - 700* [New York: Longman, 2001]) argues that Western Europe largely lost continuity with its past during this period and reformed later under the tutelage of a variety of factors, including Islam, which I will explore more fully in the next chapter.

[12] Averil Cameron deals well with this topic in *The Later Roman Empire: AD 284-430* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

This period of time is sometimes referred to as the Dark Ages, perhaps more appropriately called the early Middle Ages.

For sake of definition, and to orient ourselves historically, I will use Dunn's useful set of definitions at this point to focus our next step of the discussion:

> The Middle Ages cover a 900-year period from the political collapse of the Roman Empire in the 5th century to what is considered the beginning of modern times in the 14th century. This era in Western history is often conveniently divided into two time periods. The *Early Middle Ages,* known also as the Dark Ages, cover the period from the 5th to the 10th centuries. This is generally considered to be a period of disorder and decline, characterized by the steady growth of Christianity and a far degree of pious acceptance of what was taught. The *High Middle Ages* cover the period from the 11th to the 14th centuries. This latter period was characterized by advancements in civilization and a renewed intellectual vitality . . . Thus the Middle Ages can be said to mark the transition from ancient cultures to those of the modern world.[13]

4.3 The Fate of Greek Philosophy after the Demise of the Western Roman Empire

It is important to note that though barbarians controlled the western portions of the former Roman Empire after the 5th century, that fact in itself does not prescribe a complete destruction of law and order or of cultural integrity. If one looks carefully at Western European history during this time period, glimmers of hope and advance can be found.[14] However, it must be admitted that the West did fall prey to a tremendous intellectual-eating monster, as long established patterns of living dissolved, not necessarily immediately but relentlessly.

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[13] Dunn, *Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 64.

[14] One reason this period of time is sometimes referred to as the Dark Ages is not only a comment about its intellectual prowess but more appropriately a comment about the lack of information we have about this time in history.

> They employed Roman civil servants, drew up written codes of law, and permitted cases involving Romans to be tried by Roman law. But the integrity of ancient civilization had been destroyed, and nothing could restore or save ancient culture from complete wreck. Tyranny stalked the kingdoms erected by the barbarians, and was rather stimulated than arrested by the assassinations and civil wars which it provoked. Cities and villages wasted away. Roads and lines of shipping were abandoned, and western Europe settled down to the centuries of religious devotion, of local and personal government, and of farming . . . Before a body of responsible rulers could once more be built up, centuries of government by public enemies and consequent anarchy were to intervene.[15]

Adding to this rather dismal portrait, while Durrant's philosophical evaluations may not always be accurate, I do like the palate of literary colors he chooses to describe the decline of the western Roman Empire:

> Whatever the cause, the wealth of Rome passed into poverty, the organization into disintegration, the power and pride into decadence and apathy. Cities faded back into the undistinguished hinterland; the roads fell into disrepair and no longer hummed with trade; the small families of the educated Romans were outbred by the vigorous and untutored German stocks that crept, year after year, across the frontier; pagan culture yielded to Oriental cults; and almost imperceptibly the Empire passed into the Papacy.[16]

Here we have now arrived at a point of crisis and departure for the West, with the fall of Rome as a historical anchor point. What challenges will the Western mind face in continuing within the Greek philosophical/educational tradition in light of the barbaric advances into the once, but now deficient, Roman-Greco stability of former times? Let me outline these challenges in brief:

- Lack of political and social stability. With various Germanic tribes and individual leaders vying for authority and extension of territory, an

[15] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 575.

[16] Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy,* 104.

atmosphere of chaos and a priority on survival often trumped attempts at sustained philosophical thought and sapped intellectual energy.

- Barbarian domination brought with it an inherent lack of cultural appreciation and financial support, as was common under former Roman rule.
- Lines of communication and dialogue, always important factors in intellectual growth, both internally in Western Europe and externally to the eastern Roman Empire, were limited as provincialism increased in Europe and lines of commerce with the East faltered.
- Public education was downplayed as social cohesiveness in general decayed. Education was shifted to the isolation of monasteries, removed for all practical purposes from daily life.
- The study of the Greek language fell into disuse and the lack of adequate translations in Latin of most of the key Greek philosophical works suffocated study of this literature. With the advance of vulgar, regional languages, this problem of translation deepened.
- The western Roman mind, even prior to the fall of Rome, was biased toward practical-based thought over against speculative thought. While both Plato and Aristotle have practical aspects in their works, the genius lies in metaphysical exploration.

- While Hellenism had impacted much of the Roman Empire, its effects were amplified in the East; after the fall of Rome, this cultural influence faded rapidly in the West.
- With the rapid rise of Christianity in the West, the Church provided one important point of continuity and stability during this period. Christianity's goals at this time where primarily oriented around the goals of biblical education and the spread of orthodox thinking. Critical studies were not a priority during this time and in many cases could be seen as antithetical to the authority of the Church and the Pope, whose purposes were aimed at convergent not divergent thought.

With this catalogue of factors inhibiting the continuity and use of Greek philosophy in the now-fragmented West, it is easy to see how the influence of Plato and Aristotle would cease to be a major player in the intellectual development of Europe. "The ravages of conquest and barbarism made the prospects for cultural life extremely bleak, and within the narrowing world of culture the place allotted to classical . . . literature was insecure."[17] These factors describe well the decline and virtual disappearance of Greek thought in the West at this time. Here lies my key research question: If Greek philosophy was effectively blocked from the West in the early Middle Ages, how then did it later come to provide a foundation for the Western

[17] Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature,* 79.

intellectual tradition? That question will be addressed in the next chapter, but for now it is enough to realize and admit that such a problem did exist historically in Europe.

Before moving on to the philosophical environment of the eastern Roman Empire after the fall of Rome, I will show that the West was not completely without witnesses to the classic Greek tradition or to intellectual activity.[18] There were creative minds and faithful transmitters in the West, as I will show below, but these connectors to the Greek tradition were few and isolated and in the end would have been inadequate to bring Greek thought fully into Western thinking. But they are worthy of a brief survey within the scope of my fuller discussion. Again, note that each of the following philosophical "candles" is Christian and reflect the priorities of Christianity, namely faith over reason.[19] To greater or lesser degrees, they allowed the Greek mindset to augment their Christian metaphysics and epistemology but all are first a Christian, second a philosopher.

We have already seen in the last chapter the opinion of early western Church fathers like Tertullian who opposed any allegiance between Greek philosophy and Christian theology. Later western Fathers continued this general aversion to Greek thought around the time of the fall of Rome. For example, Jerome (ca. 340-420), renown for his remarkable Latin translation of the Bible known as the Vulgate, enjoyed the works of secular writers like Cicero as a young man. However, later in life, he was unable to reconcile his love of "pagan" literature with his devotion to

[18] See Stephen Gersh, "The Medieval Legacy From Ancient Platonism," in *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages: A Doxographic Approach,* ed. Stephen Gersh and Maarten J.F.M. Hoenen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002).

[19] See Appendix E.

Christ. He asked himself, "What communion hath light and darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? What has Horace to do with the Psalter, Virgil with the Gospels and Cicero with Paul? . . . We ought not to drink the cup of Christ and the cup of devils at the same time." He recalled a dream he once had:

> Suddenly I was caught up in the spirit and dragged before the judge's judgment seat: and there the light was so dazzling and the brightness shining from those who stood around so radiant, that I flung myself upon the ground and did not dare to look up. I was asked to state my condition and replied that I was a Christian. But He who presided said: "Thou liest; thou art a Ciceronian, not a Christian. For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also."[20]

The opposition of Western Christianity deepened as time went on. For example, in 398, the Fourth Council of Carthage declared the reading of secular works prohibited. In the sixth century, Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome and sometimes considered to be the first Pope (i.e., the first bishop of Rome to wield the full authority of the papal see) continued this advocacy of nonuse of pagan literature. Even though he had received a good education himself, he was opposed to liberal culture that depended on Greek thought. Having seen the endless controversies, often based on Greek reasoning, in the eastern portion of the Church, Gregory desired unity and harmony over even the potential for schism. While Gregory the Great, no doubt, had as part of his early education an introduction to the Greek classics, it is reported that Gregory, even though ambassador to the Eastern Patriarch at Constantinople for six years, never bothered to learn Greek.

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[20] Rufinus quoting Jerome in "Rufinus' Apology," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. 3, Second Series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2004, originally published by the Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1893), 462.

With Christianity the ever-present overseer of philosophical energy in the West in the early Middle Ages, the stream of Greek intellectual activity can be seen reduced to a trickle in the following examples.

4.31 Augustine

Augustine (354-430) is easily the most prominent of the later western Church Fathers. His route to Christianity was long and eventful and was not fully embraced until his 30s. His education included classical studies, mostly in Latin but some in Greek.[21] He floated between several philosophical positions as a young adult, finally becoming part of a neo-Platonist group. Later he abandoned the neo-Platonists but his attraction to Plato was long-lasting. This is not surprising. Plato's idea of the Forms was easily transferable into Christianity's idea of God, as One who was above the level of mere physical existence, with all of its limitations and imperfections. Augustine's classic work, *City of God,* written in the shadow of the sack of Rome in 410, shows his desire to discover an unchanging Truth that perseveres beyond the accidents of history and sensory perception.[22] "Now that I had read the books of the Platonists and had been set by them towards the search for a truth that is incorporeal, I came to see *Your invisible things, which are understood by the things that are*

[21] Augustine was from the beginning a brilliant student, with an eager intellectual curiosity, but he never mastered Greek. His first Greek teacher was a brutal man who constantly beat his students, and Augustine rebelled and vowed never to learn Greek. By the time he realized he really needed to know Greek, it was too late. Although he acquired a smattering of the language, he was never really at home in it.

[22] Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

made."[23] "He draws on classical literature and philosophy alike, applying them to his work as a pastor, a controversialist, an exegete, an ethicist, and a speculative thinker more broadly. He is the only Latin church father with a truly philosophical mind, who enjoys thinking as an activity in its own right."[24]

For Augustine, Platonic thought would help him conclude that reality consisted in a type of body-spirit dualism that would (and still does) affect Christian theology in strong and often negative ways. Augustine was the premier theologian of the Latin Church until the time of Aquinas, and his study of Plato played no small part in this designation. "Largely because of his more spiritual interpretations of Plato's works, Augustine is often referred to as a spiritual idealist. Among the important Platonist concepts that Augustine incorporated into his writings were the Plato's idea of Form and sense perception, his views on the immortality of the soul, the theory of how humans acquire knowledge, and the need for a life of contemplation."[25]

While Augustine always insisted on the superiority of Scriptures as a source of knowledge, he did acknowledge the place of non-Christian writings unless there was direct disagreement between the two. Aquinas later commented, "Whenever Augustine, who was imbued with the doctrine of the Platonists, found in their writings anything consistent with the faith, he adopted it; and whatever he found

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[23] Augustine, *Confessions* 7. 20, trans. F.J. Sheed (Kansas City: Sheed, Andrews and McMeel, 1942), 123.

[24] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400,* 25.

[25] Dunn, *Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 67.

contrary to the faith, he amended."[26] As Rubenstein states, rather strongly, "For the next seven centuries, while Greek philosophy faded from memory, literate Christians ranked the works of the North African saint just below the Gospels themselves, rarely recognizing that they owed almost as much to Plato and Plotinus as to Saint Paul."[27] However, Augustine himself was always careful not to give Plato undue credit for his work. Citing the Church Father Ambrose, Augustine agreed that Plato's ideas had come by virtue of his contact with Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophet, during a time of shared residence in Egypt (although it appears now the historical confluence of their time in Egypt does not match). "Nonetheless, the Christian interpretation of Plato's philosophy exerted a tremendous influence on education over the centuries. Even Augustine's plan for studies remained in effect throughout much of the 5th through 12th centuries."[28] Dunn continues, "For Augustine, true philosophy was not possible without both faith and reason and, consequently, there was no distinction between philosophy and theology. Augustine believed that all wisdom was Christian wisdom and all of his writings are concerned with defending or explaining Christianity."[29] An important addition to Dunn's thought is that Augustine argued that philosophical reflection complemented theology, but only when these philosophical reflections were firmly grounded in a prior commitment to the underlying truth of the

[26] Quoted by Etienne Gilson, *A History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 70.

[27] Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children,* 56.

[28] Dunn, *Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 69.

[29] Ibid, 70.

Christian faith. "Thus, the legitimacy of philosophy was derived from the legitimacy of the underlying faith commitments."[30] More negatively, Eby and Arrowood give this summary of the influence of Augustine: "The net result of Augustine's writing on education was to retard free scholarship. He advocated limiting study to the narrowly utilitarian and to theology."[31]

Regarding the medieval Platonic tradition as a whole, especially as rooted in Augustine, Raymond Klibansky reminds us,

> it is much too complex to be described indiscriminately as either Platonism, as was formerly, or Neoplatonism, as is now, the rule. The first view fails to recognize the difference which separates every form of mediaeval Platonism from Plato's own thought. The second, a reaction against the first, commits the opposite error . . . Just as often, however, we find a kind of Platonism which is neither the doctrine of Plato nor that of Plotinus or Proclus, but, based on Hellenistic thought, nourished by the religious experience, Christian, Jewish or Islamic, of later centuries, and intimately fused with teachings from Stoic and other philosophies, is, in fine, something new and individual, difficult to bring under a simple heading."[32]

4.32 Boethius

Plato lived on, to some small extent, through Augustine, "while Aristotle became a vague, disembodied legend—an ancient wizard, once very powerful, whose ideas were now all but forgotten . . . That anything at all remained of Aristotle's work

[30] Michael Murray, "Philosophy and Christian Theology," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/christiantheology-philosophy/>, accessed August 7, 2007.

[31] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 648.

[32] Raymond Klibansky, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition During the Middle Ages* (New York: Kraus International Publications, 1982, first published 1939), 36.

in the West . . . was largely the result of one man's effort [namely, Boethius]."[33] Boethius (480-524) has sometimes been given the title, "Last of the Roman philosophers and the first of the scholastic theologians,"[34] which describes his importance as a transitional figure after the fall of Rome. Boethius was minister under Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths and ironically was put to death by this same administration for allegations of conspiracy with the Byzantines. Boethius received a classical education and may have studied in Athens, and perhaps Alexandria. His acknowledged accomplishment in Greek was remarkable given the reduced knowledge in this area, which accompanied the end of the Western empire.[35]

The lifelong project of Boethius was a deliberate attempt to preserve ancient classical knowledge, particularly philosophy. He intended to translate all the works of Aristotle and Plato from the original Greek into Latin. Education in Greek was growing increasingly precarious. How would people in the West study philosophy if they had no knowledge of its language? No one had translated the complete works of Plato and Aristotle. The loss of literacy in Greek was therefore a real and present catastrophe for Western society. "The very idea that this translation was needed is eloquent testimony both to Boethius' conviction of the importance of philosophy in

[33] Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children,* 57.

[34] H.F. Stewart and E.K. Rand, "Life of Boethius," in *Boethius, The Theological Tractates,* trans. H.F. Stewart, E.K. Rand, and S.J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), xii.

[35] Elizabeth Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1985).

the intellectual lives of Christians and to the waning of instruction in Greek in the west."[36]

In Boethius's own words, here was his plan:

> My fixed intention is to translate into Latin every work of Aristotle that comes to my hand and furnish it with a Latin commentary. Thus I may present, well ordered and illustrated with the light of comment, whatever subtlety of logic's art, whatever weight of moral experience, and whatever insight into natural truth, may be gathered from Aristotle. And I mean to translate all the dialogues of Plato, or reduce them in my commentary to a Latin form. Having accomplished this, I shall not have despised the opinions of Aristotle and Plato if I evoke a certain concord between them and show in how many things of importance for philosophy they agree.[37]

Falling far short of his magnificent dream, his completed translations of some of Aristotle's works, [38]especially on logic, were indeed the only significant portions of Aristotle available in Europe until the 12th century! Some of his translations were mixed with his own commentary, which reflected both Aristotelian and Platonic concepts. Boethius also wrote a significant commentary on the *Isagoge* (an Introduction to the work of Aristotle) by the neo-Platonist Porphyry, which highlighted the existence of the problem of universals and Aristotle's metaphysics. His most important personal creation was the *Consolation of Philosophy*, a work in which "Lady Philosophy" is employed as "the handmaid of religion," a common Christian construct during this period, but where the elements of Socratic argument

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[36] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400,* 46.

[37] Quoted by Edmund Reiss, *Boethius* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 53.

[38] Boethius completed the following translations of Aristotle's works: *Categories, Interpretation, Prior Analytics, Posterior Analytics, Topics,* and *Sophistical Refutations,* with commentaries on some of these. See M. Asztalos, "Boethius as a Transmitter of Greek Logic to the Latin West: The Categories," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 95 (1993): 367-407.

are present, similar to the work of Augustine's dialogues. Boethius also translated the basic Greek curriculum of the age into Latin, the quadrivium, which became standard reading during the medieval period.[39]

Eby and Arrowood describe the significance of Boethius for our current discussion: "The importance of Boethius lies in the fact that he combined competence in classical scholarship and the ability to write popularly with the interests and point of view of Latin Christianity . . . he brought to the service of the Church a grasp of ancient learning not equaled by any of his literary contemporaries of western Europe."[40] Boethius did succeed in transmitting at least a few of the tools of the Greek philosophers, Aristotle's logic. But few of his contemporaries had enough interest or enough skill to use his hard work. "Prospects for Boethius' writings were dim. In fact, all of Boethius' translations of Aristotle's treatises on logic disappeared, at least temporarily, from historical record. Some re-emerged, but only after three centuries of tenuous, obscure survival."[41]

4.33 Western Monasteries

Throughout religious history, people have at times renounced the priorities and pressures of society and retired into solitude to achieve a measure of personal holiness through contemplation and asceticism. During the period of decay, including

[39] David L. Wagner, *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).

[40] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 659.

[41] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 136.

moral, of the Roman Empire in the third and fourth centuries, monasticism made a powerful appeal to many. Monasticism in the West differed from that in the East and rather than appealing to isolated individuals who sought solitude in wilderness settings, western monastics typically gathered into groups or cloisters in buildings soon known as monasteries. The greatest leader of Western monasticism was Benedict (ca. 480-543), who provided basic guidelines that many monasteries adopted. Monasteries grew across Western Europe and attracted some of the best minds of the Christian church. Monasteries helped keep a semblance of scholarship alive during the period between 500-1000, as urban life was disrupted and as books were lost.[42] One key interest of monks was the preservation of ancient manuscripts, mostly religious but occasionally secular. One important example of this kind of work is found in the person of Cassiodorus (478-573) who devoted his later life to the task of collecting, translating, and copying both patristic and classical literature (including the work of Boethius). The scriptorium, a room dedicated to the painstaking work of copying by hand manuscripts, became a regular feature of the better monasteries. "For centuries the monasteries of Europe were the chief sources of fresh copies of books, as well as principal preservers of them."[43] These transmitters "whether inadvertent or deliberate, produced the texts that connected early medieval thinkers to

[42] Books were lost due to "fire and mold, but mostly from neglect, because few people wanted to read or copy them. (In the world of books, when copying stops, books begin to die because they are fragile.) Some book owners willfully destroyed books—not the pages and the binding, but the text written on them—to make palimpsests: copyists scrubbed expensive parchment pages to erase the old text and wrote new, usually religious text over it," Ibid., 139.

[43] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 662.

the classical and Christian traditions. The places where these texts were taught, studied, commented on, and copied became, in this period, monasteries."[44] But, as Rubenstein admits, "For the next five centuries, they [classic texts] are copied and recopied by monks who hardly know what they are preserving, or why."[45]

Eby and Arrowood continue with this rather negative summary of the survivability of Greek philosophical tradition:

> The decline of Latin and Greek scholarship, to which many factors had contributed, had been greatly accelerated by the victories of the barbarians; so that teaching and learning were at a low ebb in the age of St. Gregory. The victory of the Church, moreover, had meant a revolution in education. Pagan schools had been closed; and since the literature and learning of ancient Greece and Rome were either pagan or secular, they were regarded with disfavor. The authority of the Church in all matters touching the welfare of souls was strongly maintained, and teaching and scholarship were such matters. The Church regarded as praiseworthy only that learning which contributed to the growth of Christian character and of the Church. Beyond this, the only learning considered allowable was that which, while it did not interfere with the Church's work or with Christian living, was necessary for practical ends. Secular scholarship, as such, was of real but subordinate interest in the Church. *The authority of the Church in matters of opinion, scholarship, and teaching was conceded on all sides; education had become virtually a clerical monopoly* [emphasis added].[46]

4.34 Irish Centers of Learning

The development of Celtic Christianity is a fascinating story, too long to tell adequately here except in its barest outline. Britain was controlled by the Roman Empire by the first century A.D. and in turn was influenced by Christianity as the

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[44] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400,* 51.

[45] Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children,* 67-68.

[46] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 663-665.

Empire later adopted this new religion as its own. Later, the pagan Anglos and Saxons overran the island and forced many Christians to escape to Ireland. In the fifth century, Patrick evangelized Ireland, creating a unique and zealous brand of Christianity, not always in agreement with the Latin church based in Rome but instilled with a sense of literacy and learning that would create the conditions that allowed Ireland to become "the isle of saints and scholars," and thus help preserve Western culture while Europe was being overrun by barbarians. Irish monks and scribes copied manuscripts of Greek and Latin writers, both pagan and Christian, while libraries and learning on the continent were reduced to minimal activity. "Between 550-600, they [Irish monks] began sending missionaries of their own to Scotland, England, France, Switzerland, and northern Italy. To the monasteries which they founded, the Irish monks brought a fierce desire to learn and to copy ancient pagan as well as Christian books."[47]

Some have presented the thesis that it was Irish scholars, isolated in the far corner of northwest Europe, who kept alive certain Greek philosophical priorities and works, while the rest of Europe languished in cultural obscurity. As Europe moved out of the so-called Dark Ages, the Irish helped replant the seeds of cultural literary and classic education.[48] "The channel through which learning flowed back into northern Europe is easy to trace. From the monastic schools and libraries in Celtic

[47] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 139.

[48] For example, see Cahill's *How the Irish Saved Civilization,* as well as Pierre Riche, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West—Sixth Through Eighth Centuries,* trans. from 3rd French ed. by John J. Contrini (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1976).

Ireland, it flowed to Anglo-Saxon England, and from there to Gaul."[49] However, in spite of the important influence of Irish intellectuals during the so-called Dark Ages, in regard to the present discussion, realistically "the amount of actual classical literature known in Ireland in pre-Carolingian times is much debated and appears to have been small indeed."[50]

4.35 The Carolingian Renaissance

While other small pinpoints of light could be considered in our quest to discover how Western Europe, internally, might keep alive a line of continuity with Greek philosophical priorities, I will conclude our view of the Early Middle Ages in the West with a short summary of the renewal of learning under the leadership of Charlemagne. The history of the transition from the Merovingians to the Carolingian regimes is fascinating but beyond the scope of this research. To compact history, in 771, Charlemagne (Charles the Great) of the Carolingian line of kings was crowned king of the Franks (roughly modern France). In 800, in an alliance formed with the Pope, he was crowned Emperor of the Romans (*Imperator Romanorum*), a title later to evolve into the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, which was an attempt to remake the glory days of the old Roman Empire within the confines largely of central Europe (roughly France, Germany and Italy).

Charlemagne was an unusually capable and charismatic leader. His commanding personality was supplemented by his equally commanding seven-foot

[49] Jill Claster, *The Medieval Experience:300-1400* (New York: NYU Press, 1982), 128.

[50] Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars,* 86.

height. He was a politician and military leader. But for our purposes, he was a man of culture, or at least desired to be. Not since the time of Boethius and Cassiodorus in the sixth century had cultural priorities been so uplifted. Charlemagne persuaded the great English scholar Alcuin to join his court and to assume leadership of his palace school, which soon attracted other able scholars such as John Scottus, (under Charles the Bald) knowledgeable in Greek and in the neo-Platonistic literature. Other contributions from this period include the development of the Carolingian minuscule, a style of writing that introduced the use of lower case letters. A standardized version of Latin was also developed that allowed for the coining of new words while retaining the grammatical rules of Classical Latin. This Medieval Latin became the common language of scholarship and allowed travelers to make themselves understood across Europe.

> The palace school of Charlemagne was an integral link in the chain of men and schools responsible for passing on to the medieval university the basic outlines of its curriculum, the trivium, and the quadrivium that had been derived from Roman higher education . . . The cultural activities of Charlemagne were an important step in the process by which the German people [especially Franks in this case] assimilated classical and Christian learning.[51]

Cantor remarks the while "the poverty and localism characteristic of the first Europe make it appear insignificant in comparison with the Roman Empire and the contemporary civilizations of Byzantium and Islam" the Carolingian reforms, though

[51] Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church,* 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 182.

not remarkably large, "marked the starting point for the political and intellectual growth of later centuries."[52]

Unfortunately, the Carolingian dynasty lasted but a century and soon Western Europe was again at the mercy of feuding chieftains whose main concerns were personal gain rather than intellectual advancement.

> In the 9th and 10th centuries the empire [Frankish] was challenged and eventually devastated by constant attacks by Norsemen, Huns, and Saracens, and once again learning in most of northern and western Europe broke down. The Danish and Viking invasions, which had begun in the late 8th century and continued for some 200 years, destroyed many monasteries and libraries . . . In 867, the Danes overran much of northern England, and York was ransacked. Its books were scattered and its priests and scholars killed or driven away . . . All over western Europe the story was much the same, and where monasteries were not destroyed they often suffered from stagnation and neglect.[53]

"The rulers of the Frankish and Gothic kingdoms dropped all pretense of being dependents of the Emperor [in Constantinople]. The independence of the Roman Church was asserted and maintained. Europe was about to shake itself free from Asia, and build independently."[54]

So, as we leave the West, now in the center of the Middle Ages, we find that Greek philosophy does have a few witnesses—but not nearly enough to transform Europe from its backward encounter with barbaric multiculturalism and de-emphasis

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[52] Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages,* 189. John Marenbon, working specifically with the transmission of Plato during this period, says, "Explicit references to Plato and Platonists were rare in the Middle Ages [in the West] before 1100, and many do not, in any case, show any engagement with Plato and his thought," "Platonism—A Doxographic Approach: The Early Middle Ages," in *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages,* ed. Gersh and Hoenen, 86.

[53] Michael H. Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1995), 94-95.

[54] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval,* 576-577.

on classical thinking. "The period after St. Augustine is marked not only by the almost universal disappearance of a knowledge of Greek, and a steady change in the type of Latin used, but also by a great decline in intellectual culture."[55] By the year 1000, there was growth in educational institutions, respect for scholarship existed, and contact with the Greek world was not entirely lost. A light is still dimly lit, but it will take more for Greek philosophy to move into its foundational position it will command in later Western thought. "Aristotle's [and Plato's] work lay dormant while Europe enduring half a millennium of endemic violence, poverty, and disorder. Little wonder that, during this seemingly endless winter, those seeking comfort and meaning would turn to the certitudes of faith rather than the conundrums of philosophy."[56] Perhaps the philosophy-poor West will be able to reinstate itself intellectually by leaning on its former Roman cousins to the East who still possess the Greek masters. To that geo-political area we will now turn. Thomas helps us summarize our path so far in this chapter:

> All roads may lead to Rome as the last independent culture of the ancient Mediterranean world, and certainly Rome was a major source for the preservation of classical Greek culture. Still, the roads from the present back to Rome have been interrupted at crucial points and thus, transmission of the cultural legacy did not proceed directly from the Roman empire through medieval European kingdoms into modern western states. And there are more paths from ancient Greece to the modern world than the route leading through the Roman west. Each of them preserved certain elements of the inheritance and discarded others, thereby creating distinctively new products. These cultural products influenced subsequent societies in still other ways.[57]

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[55] Artz, *The Mind of the Middle Ages*, 183-184.

[56] Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children,* 68.

[57] Thomas, *Paths from Ancient Greece,* 1-2.

4.4 The Fate of Greek Philosophy after the Rise of the Eastern Byzantine Empire

Having examined the Western remnants of the Roman Empire for signs of Greek philosophical presence, our conclusion has shown that continuity with the Greek classical tradition was slowed if not stopped during the 500 years after the fall of Rome. My research question has probed the connection between modern philosophical/educational foundations and the early Greek writings and ideas of Plato and Aristotle. While looking at the "advancement" of the Western mind during the early Middle Ages, the prospects of recovering the Greek masters appears dim.

But the prospects of a continued Greek tradition appear more likely in the Greek-speaking East, in the remains of the Roman Empire centered in Constantinople. Yet this is where the safe travel of Plato and Aristotle take a strange turn and where, like in the West, these Greek thinkers find a roadblock rather than free passage to the future or to the West.

The history of this period, as has already been alluded to, hinges on the figure of Constantine—doubly so. Not only did Constantine move the capitol of the Roman Empire to the eastern city of Constantinople, he is also credited with issuing the 313 Edit of Milan, whereby Christianity became a legal religion—to become the Empire's only religion before the end of the century. The first action decided the fate of Rome and the West by concentrating Roman power in the East and allowing the relentless Teutonic barbarians to take over Western Europe. But it also had the effect of isolating what was left of Greco-Roman culture in the East. The Greek philosophers were saved but they were taken captive. The isolation of the eastern portion of the

Roman Empire, Byzantium as it was much later termed, leads us into the second key decision that Constantine is credited with making, namely the establishment of Christianity with the Roman Empire.

4.41 The Effects of Christianity on Philosophy in the Byzantine Empire

Constantine (ca. 285-337) received his initial indoctrination concerning Christianity by his mother Helena. Such a predisposition may have prompted him in 312, when it seemed that his enemies would overwhelm him (the Battle of Milvian Bridge over the Tiber River against Maxentius in the year 312), to interpret a vision of a cross in the sky with the words "in this sign conquer" ("Εν τούτω νίκα, often rendered in Latin as "*In hoc signo vinces*") as a favorable omen from the Christian God about whom he had been taught as a child. This visionary cross became Constantine's military symbol and was a combination of the Greek letters *chi* and *rho*; the early Christian symbol consists in a kind of cross formed by the Greek letters chi (χ) and rho (ρ), the first two in the name Christ (Greek: Χριστός). After winning this decisive battle, Constantine embarked on a policy of favoring the Christian church, quite the opposite approach of his predecessor Galerius who had tried to wipe it out between 303-305. With his co-emperor Luicinius, he issued the revolutionary Edit of Milan in which freedom of religion was granted throughout the Empire, including conspicuously Christianity. Some have attributed Constantine's acceptance and endorsement of Christianity less a spiritually-derived insight and more a matter of political expediency; perhaps Christianity could serve as a new center of unity within

the Empire, saving the classic culture and security of years gone by.[58] Whether Constantine's conversion was sincere or not, Christianity definitely felt the repercussions of his new attitude. During the next few years Constantine issued edicts that restored confiscated property to Christians and even set aside the "Day of the Sun" (Sunday) as an official day of rest and worship. Perhaps rather arrogantly, he even assumed a position of leadership at the pivotal council of Nicea in 325 where Christian leaders debated key issues of theology.[59]

The sons of Constantine continued his policy of favoring Christianity. With a short setback during the reign of Julian (361-363), Christianity gained momentum and popularity. In 380 and 381 Theodosius I issued edicts making Christianity the exclusive religion of the Empire. The Edict of Constantinople in 392 went further and prohibited paganism.[60] With these actions, Church and State began the process of merging into a unified entity,[61] a process that greatly affected the flow of the Greek philosophical tradition in the Empire generally and in the eastern portion specifically.[62]

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[58] The fact the he delayed his baptism until shortly before his death and kept the pagan-derived traditional title of *Pontifex Maximus* (Chief Priest) seems to support this opinion.

[59] See, for example, Charles M Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire (Roman Imperial Biographies)* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006) and G.P. Baker, *Constantine the Great, And the Christian Revolution* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2001).

[60] "Unfortunately, the church, where it gained the power, too often became as arrogant a persecutor of paganism as the pagan religious authorities had ever been of the Christians," Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries,* 120.

[61] Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire: A. D. 100-400* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

[62] "Looking back at the steps by which Christianity, a despised sect with small numbers, became the official religion of the might Roman Empire, one might well believe, with the advantage of time, that

As I have shown in the previous chapter, the reaction of eastern Christian writers to Greek philosophy was generally more favorable than the attitude of western Christians. As we move into the Byzantine period, there is ample evidence that the classical Greek tradition was put to use within Christian education, to some degree. Let me point out several of these positive supporting witnesses before discussing some of the moderating effects of Christianity on the advance of philosophy. By addressing these positive elements first, I want to show that the common conception of Christianity as an anti-intellectual force in the eastern Empire, whose primary role was to suppress and censor Greek philosophy, is overstated and often exaggerated. As Downey points out, in a very practical sense,

> there are observers who feel that Christianity, in order to make its way among Gentiles in the Graeco-Roman world, necessarily had to adopt the Hellenic vocabulary and modes of thought. The adoption was inevitable, it is pointed out, because these were the only terms in which the educated citizens of the Graeco-Roman civilization of those days, trained in the educational system begun in classical Greece and perfected in the Hellenistic period, could think of or discuss philosophical and religious ideas. If Christianity was to grow and fulfill its early mission among people whose schooling consisted of the study of the classic Greek authors, Christianity had no alternative.[63]

Highly educated people in the eastern Empire would have had a hard time believing that Christian teaching could be true, since, for instance, some of the apostles were mere fishermen and probably poorly educated. How could cultivated

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this victorious march was detrimental to the church . . . while there were advantages to close association with the state, there were also marked disadvantages. The government in return for position, protection, and aid demanded the right to interfere in spiritual and theological matters . . . The long vexatious problem of the struggle between the church and state had its beginnings in this era," Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries,* 120.

[63] Glanville Downey, "The Byzantine Church and the Presentness of the Past," 85. The outline of the following discussion is based on his research.

and well-read Roman citizens take seriously a new doctrine put forward by such men? Educated people in the time of Constantine, in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, could more readily think of religion in the established terms of the Greek philosophy and dialectic in which they had been trained. At the same time, there were not yet enough trained Christian instructors who were prepared to meet educated pagans on their own intellectual level. Some Christian teachers discovered that using existing philosophical categories could help spread their message to new converts who had been immersed in classical learning. Some of these Christian leaders could see universal elements in pagan philosophical thought which could be separated from pagan cult and religion, and integrated, with Christianity, to the latter's profit.[64] Once this was understood, the way was open for Christian thought to take advantage of the elements in the pagan intellectual tradition that could play a creative part in Christian education and speculation. "It was important to those educated Christians who were not ferociously fideist and anti-rational . . . to express their faith in such a way that it could be seen to be not a mere barbarian obscurantism, but the true 'philosophy' in the ancient sense."[65]

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[64] In his declaration forbidding Christians to teach the Greek classics, the emperor Julian asked if it was not impossible to teach Greek philosophy without adopting the Greek gods from whom such philosophy was generated. (Julian was a proponent of the pagan gods and was in this case ridiculing the Christian scholars of the day.) While Julian's ban on Christians teaching the classics lapsed with his death, the issues he raised did not. Greek education was filled with allusions to the Greek gods and their myths. If Byzantine were to make use of classical Greek education, it must also find a way to eliminate the religious milieu it came packaged in, Burstein, "The Greek Tradition," *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 46.

[65] A.H. Armstrong, "Greek Philosophy and Christianity," in *The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal,* ed. Finley, 354-355.

As I have stated earlier, "paganism" and "Hellenism" came to be recognized among some (but not all) Christian thinkers as two quite different things. This differentiation has not always been understood clearly, namely the distinction which was often carefully made between paganism and Hellenism, and the insistence upon the unique value of the classical heritage. When this characteristic is lost from sight, unreflective and undue criticism of the intellectual tradition of the Greek Church results in either the belief that, 1. It was totally opposed to integration of Greek thought in any form and allowed the classical tradition to be buried in Byzantine monasteries with a resultant philosophical sterility or 2. It has given up its Gospel origins and its Hebrew heritage for an overlay of Hellenism, abdicating its uniqueness of thought and technique.[66]

There is evidence, however, that some Byzantine Christians thinkers were able to make the Hellenism connection in appropriate ways and to enable rather than disable Greek thought. The result was that, after the initial period of hesitation, some Christian thinkers made it plain that there was real profit to be derived from the study of classical literature, if the obviously unsuitable parts of it were passed over. The Greek Church thus made the classical heritage, in its best aspects, a part of its own intellectual life to some extent. As I have already noted, many of the Greek Christian thinkers felt that some of the classical writers, notably Plato, had propounded such teachings that they were entitled to be considered forerunners of Christianity.

[66] This last thought is exactly the thesis of Richard R. Hopkins, *How Greek Philosophy Corrupted the Christian Concept of God* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon Pub & Dist. Inc., 2005).

The Greek fathers, especially the Cappadocians of the fourth century, [67] had for the most part been educated in the classical tradition, and they knew enough of the world to see that Christianity could get real help from the classical tradition.[68] One of the Cappadocians, Gregory of Nazianzen, gave this view of education and indirectly on secular philosophy, in his eulogy of St. Basil:

> I take it as admitted by men of sense, that the first of our advantages is education; and not only this our more noble form of it, which disregards rhetorical ornaments and glory, and holds to salvation, and beauty in the objects of our contemplation: but even that external culture which many Christians ill-judgingly abhor, as treacherous and dangerous, and keeping us afar from God. For as we ought not to neglect the heavens, and earth, and air, and all such things, because some have wrongly seized upon them, and honour God's works instead of God: but to reap what advantage we can from them for our life and enjoyment, while we avoid their dangers; not raising creation, as foolish men do, in revolt against the Creator, but from the works of nature apprehending the Worker, and again, as we know that neither fire, nor food, nor iron, nor any other of the elements, is of itself most useful, or most harmful, except according to the will of those who use it; and as we have compounded healthful drugs from certain of the reptiles; so from secular literature we have received principles of enquiry and speculation, while we have rejected their idolatry, terror, and pit of destruction. Nay, even these have aided us in our religion, by our perception of the contrast between what is worse and what is better, and by gaining strength for our doctrine from the

[67] A monastic family, located in the inland district of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) known as Cappadocia. These Fathers, who consist of Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzus, set out to demonstrate that Christians could hold their own in conversations with learned Greek-speaking intellectuals and that Christian faith, while it was against some of the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, could use elements of Greek thought. They made major contributions to the definition of the Trinity finalized at the First Council of Constantinople in 381 and the final version of the Nicene Creed that was formulated there.

[68] It is significant that as the Cappadocian fathers were working out their ideas, one of the last of the great pagan thinkers, Themistius (ca. 317-388), was pointing to the universal validity of Greek ethics and philosophy as an argument for the preservation of the pagan way of life. From his point of view, Hellenic thought had been created first and Christianity had only been a follower. His program illustrates the recognition, from the "hostile" camp, of what the contemporary Christian thinkers had already perceived, from their own different point of view. On the later influence of the Greek fathers in Western thought, see the essay by E.F. Rice, Jr., "The Humanist Idea of Christian Antiquity and the Impact of Greek Patristic Work on Sixteenth-Century Thought," in *Classical Influences on European Culture,* ed. R.R. Bolgar (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 199-203.

> weakness of theirs. We must not then dishonour education, because some men are pleased to do so, but rather suppose such men to be boorish and uneducated, desiring all men to be as they themselves are, in order to hide themselves in the general, and escape the detection of their want of culture.[69]

Great preachers like John Chrysostom made a thorough study of Greek rhetoric, and even studied with pagan teachers like Libanius simply because these teachers were at that time the best available. St. Basil wrote a small treatise entitled, "Address to the youth, how they can read heathen authors to their profit." The emperor Justinian (527-565) was an admirer of classical antiquity and his program was essentially aimed at a recovery and re-establishment of the ancient strength of the Empire—a *renovatio* of the *Imperium Romanum*.[70] The great Patriarch of Constantinople in the ninth century, Photius, realized fully the role of the classical tradition in forming and solidifying the national pride of the Greek people, and the classical revival which he led played a great part in the contemporary, but brief, resurgence of the physical strength of the Byzantine Empire.

There was also distinguished literary and intellectual activity outside the capital, both at Alexandria, an ancient center of scholarship and teaching, and the little coastal city of Gaza in Palestine, which was a notable center of Hellenism. The significant thing about this school, for our present study, is that the teachers were Christians and that most of them wrote on both religious and secular subjects.

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[69] Gregory Nazianzen, "Oration XLIII," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. 7, Second Series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2004, originally published by the Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1894), 395.

[70] See Glanville Downey, "Justinian's View of Christianity and the Greek Classics," *Anglican Theological Review* 40 (1958): 13-22.

This is also the time when we learn about the fate of schools in Athens, where there were still academies that were direct descendants of those of classical Greece. It was here that some of the great Christian thinkers of the fourth century had received their training in Greek literature and rhetoric. Since the fourth century, however, Athens had been declining as a scholarly center, and in the time of Justinian we no longer hear of distinguished authors having been trained at Athens. In 529, two years after he became sole Emperor, Justinian issued his famous decree that resulted in the closing of the schools at Athens.

> Justinian's action is characteristic, and shows us what the Christian view of learning, and the Church's conception of its responsibility, had become. Justinian was, in fact, the first emperor who seems to have felt himself in a position to carry to its logical conclusion the educational policy which had been implicit in the Christian decision to absorb and adapt the best parts of the classical Greek intellectual heritage."[71]

With pagan teachers at the helm, Justinian, felt strongly such teachers might corrupt the minds of Christian pupils. Likewise, it was not possible to teach the classics properly without showing their relation to Christian truth, and a pagan teacher who undertook to do this was not only dangerous but morally dishonest. Hence, Justinian issued decrees forbidding pagans and heretics to teach any subject. This was, in Justinian's estimation, the only way in which he could hope to use education as an instrument in his campaign for the achievement of religious unity and orthodoxy. The story of the schools at Athens is well known. The pagan professors refused to become Christians in order to save their jobs, and found refuge at the court

[71] Downey, "The Byzantine Church and the Presentness of the Past," 91.

of the Persian King, (which topic we will explore later).[72] There was no attempt to reestablish these schools; apparently the schools, including the Academy, were moribund anyway, and it looks as though the flourishing centers at Alexandria and Gaza could provide all the instruction that was needed.

There have been charges that it was the Christian church that was responsible for not only suppressing the use of classical literature, but of active engagement in eliminating this kind of literature altogether. Here is a quote representative of a view of Christianity as extremely repressive, referring to the great Library of Alexandria: "The Church burned enormous amounts of literature. In 391 Christians burned down one of the world's greatest libraries in Alexandria, said to have housed 700,000 rolls."[73] In reality, the fate of the Library of Alexandria is a question of great debate. There is ample evidence to show that the Library was actually destroyed in part or in full on several occasions by civil unrest unrelated to Christian involvement. It does seem to be true that a small, daughter library, the Serapeum, was thought to have survived these earlier destructions and this structure likely was destroyed by the Patriarch Theophilis in 391, under the directives of Emperor Theodosius. But to charge the Christian church with the destruction of the most renowned collection of classical literature in Alexandria is a gross overstatement at best. The bottom line here is that the church did destroy some collections of texts, but these outbursts were not

[72] The scholars Damascius, Simplicius, Priscianus Lydius, and four others resolved in 531 or 532 to seek the protection of Khosrau I, king of Persia, but, though they received a hearty welcome, they found themselves unable to endure a continued residence among those whom they considered to be "barbarians." Before two years had elapsed they returned to Greece.

[73] Helen Ellerbe, *The Dark Side of Christian History* (Orlando: Morningstar Books, 1995), 46.

typically directed against "classics" and these gestures were not wholesale but rather were only exceptional.[74]

To summarize these more positive elements of the Byzantine Empire's ability and desire to preserve and use the Greek philosophy classics, Downey provides this glowing conclusion:

> This sense of the reality of the past as part of the present was not confined to the tradition stemming from the Scriptures, though it was here that the presentness of the past was most real. It passed over into the attitude toward the whole literary and intellectual tradition which was the Byzantine heritage. So it was that the Byzantine Church kept the past alive as something which furnished the source and background for the present and a foundation for the future. Here we can see the strength of a Christian society taught and led by a learned Church. This history may serve to remind us of our own spiritual and intellectual origins through which we are linked to the ancient world and the ancient Church.[75]

Support for the key role of Byzantium and Christianity in preserving Greek philosophy for the Western tradition can be widely found.[76] I do not deny that Byzantium played a key role in keeping alive the philosophical tradition of Plato and Aristotle, but I feel that their role in moving this philosophical tradition to the West

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[74] This example is commonly added to the Alexandrian library incident: In the year 363 or 364 Emperor Jovian, the immediate successor of the apostate Julian on the throne of the eastern Roman empire, professed Christianity. As a document of his earnestness, he burned in the city of Antioch a library of pagan books that had been established there by Julian.

[75] Downey, "The Byzantine Church and the Presentness of the Past," 99. Burstein adds, "Byzantine scholars did more than preserve the texts of Greek classics. They invented the modern cursive Greek script still used today and transcribed ancient manuscripts into it. Whenever possible they sought out rare manuscripts to improve and complete the texts of authors known to them, and compiled from surviving works of ancient literary scholarship the lexica, collections of scholia, and commentaries that enable us to understand the Greek classics," Burstein, "The Greek Tradition," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 48.

[76] Again, note Angold's strong discussion in *Byzantium: The Bridge from Antiquity to the Middle Ages.* This is also the thesis of M.L.W. Laistner, (*Christianity and Pagan Culture in the Later Roman Empire* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1951]), who shows that Christianity took the best of pagan culture and transformed it into what would later become Western Civilization, although his topics center more on ethics than metaphysics.

can be overstated and the positive function and attitude of the Church toward Greek thought can be exaggerated. Let me continue this discussion by balancing out the positive views expressed above with contrary opinions.

The predominant Greek philosophical influence on Christianity in Byzantium was always Plato. Plato allowed Christians to talk about spiritual realities and the incorporeality of spirit and soul.[77] The influence of Aristotle during this time was primarily secondary and supportive of Plato's ideas; his logic served as an introduction to the bigger ideas found in Plato's thoughts. As we have discovered, Middle Platonic ideas evolved (or devolved depending on your perspective) in neo-Platonism, a creative attempt to combine Plato with Christianity. Neo-Platonism had many strong proponents within the Christian ranks, especially at Antioch and Alexandria,[78] but ultimately this syncretistic philosophy was determined to be heretical by orthodox Christians and as neo-Platonism was pushed aside, so was Plato.[79] The problems with neo-Platonism are grounded in the Church's earlier issues

[77] Colin Brown, *Christianity & Western Thought, Volume 1: From the Ancient World to the Age of Enlightenment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990).

[78] Iamblichus was the chief representative of Syrian neo-Platonism, though his influence spread over much of the ancient world. He initially studied under Anatolius, and later went on to study under Porphyry, a pupil of Plotinus, the founder of neo-Platonism. Around 304, he returned to Syria to found his own school at Apameia (near Antioch), a city famous for its neo-Platonic philosophers. Here he designed a curriculum for studying Plato and Aristotle, and he wrote important commentaries. Later, Iamblichus and his work would be discredited by orthodox Christian scholars who saw in his ideas the heretical trends common in all neo-Platonism critiques in the middle Byzantine era.

[79] Refer to Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (Gifford Lectures Series) (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1995). Refer also to the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, the anonymous theologian and philosopher of the 5th century, whose works show strong neo-Platonic influence, using ideas from both Plotinus and Proclus.

with the neo-pagan doctrine of Gnosticism,[80] which found salvation through rational processes and which disassociated body and spirit to such a degree that Christianity either fell into the equally troubling pits of legalism or antinomianism. Gnosticism is often considered the first heresy of the Church, alluded to at several points in the New Testament books of the first century. It is easy to see how neo-Platonism, once it was associated with the older and more insidious heresy of Gnosticism, would move many Christians toward an attitude of suspicion regarding Plato and philosophy in general.[81] The key problems in the thought of neo-Platonism regard the age-old dualistic controversy between matter and spirit. Actually, neo-Platonism was accused by opponents on both ends of the discussion spectrum of being heretical. At one extreme, God was certainly separate from the world, but He was so far removed from creation as to be unapproachable. At the other extreme, God was connected to creation as part of a monistic understanding of ontology, but taken too far, this idea led to pantheism. Neither extreme was acceptable to Christianity, which has always held a tension between the transcendence and immanence of God. Closely related to this discussion were the heated discussions regarding the nature of Jesus Christ. Was He God? Was He man? What He both? These questions weighed heavily on the minds of the early Christian councils in the fourth and fifth centuries. The Council of Nicea, in 325, debated this issue and condemned the view of Arianism (which had

[80] See the strong set of essays in Richard T. Wallis, ed., *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

[81] A standard Christian reference defining neo-Platonism is found in the article written by William Turner, "Neo-Platonism," *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, <http://www.newadvent.org /cathen/10742b.htm>, accessed August 10, 2007.

philosophical connections to neo-Platonism). These "nature of Christ" debates moved back and forth between strongly held positions, with the result that creeds and councils pronounced with authority orthodox positions and anathematized those who found themselves on the wrong side of the majority; sometimes the same Christian leader was pronounced orthodox or unorthodox several times during his lifetime.[82] So while neo-Platonism kept alive the Greek philosophers, it also created a strain in philosophical connections with those who desired to find full harmony with Plato.[83] Armstrong states a negative outcome of this,

> . . . the persistence of independent Hellenistic ways of religious thinking as part of our traditional inheritance has often led to criticism of and resistance to what are generally taken as distinctively Christian attitudes, especially those which make sharp distinctions and oppositions between God and creation, or faith and reason, or church and world.[84]

Colish reminds us that the widespread fear that philosophy would lead Christians resurfaced in the patristic period and after, especially at the point of theological debate. "For, despite the constructive use of philosophy by the church fathers and some later thinkers, its use by heretics opened a wedge between philosophy and orthodox theology."[85]

Before we begin to think that Aristotle will come to the forefront, now that Plato's weaknesses have been discovered, Fernand Van Steenberghen reminds us,

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[82] Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries,* provides a good summary of these councils, 125-133.

[83] See P. Courcelle, "Anti-Christian Arguments and Christian Platonism: From Arnobius to St Ambrose," in *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century,* ed. A. Momigliano (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

[84] Armstrong, "Greek Philosophy and Christianity," 373.

[85] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400,* 121.

> The spread of Aristotelianism was not to go unopposed, nor would it fail to stir up great controversies. The tendency towards empiricism and agnosticism exhibited by Aristotle [in contrast to Plato] was destined to arouse the distrust of the religiously minded and would not satisfy metaphysicians; the gaps and obscurities in his system were to give ground for endless discussions among his disciples. Almost always, thinkers who have found their inspiration in the peripatetic philosophy have found themselves bound to correct or complete the view of the Stagirite [Aristotle was born in Stagirus] with ideas borrowed from Platonism and neo-Platonism.[86]

Laughlin calls the period from 641-856 the "Byzantine Dark Age" and attributes a lack of creativity and even "rationality" to this time for some very good reasons. During this period, Byzantium saw recurrent bouts of the plague and military tensions with a variety of invaders, which reduced the Empire's ability to do philosophical work (remembering that advances in philosophy are seldom done during times where mere survival becomes a priority) and taking a heavy toll in terms of quality of life and even life expectancy.[87] Even though an Imperial Academy was created in Constantinople in 425, records reveal "no notable scholar who graduated from the school, no attempt to revive pagan philosophy, and no new books advancing philosophical scholarship"[88] until the time of Psellus and Italus in the eleventh century. "Medieval Greek-speaking scholars had inherited the writings of Plato and

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[86] Fernand Van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West,* trans. Leonard Johnston (Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts, Publisher, 1955), 16. This "incompleteness" of Aristotle's metaphysics will shadow his work up to and into the Scholastic era.

[87] The population of Constantinople, for example, decreased from 500,000 to less than 100,000 between 500-700, according to Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 88. According to Angold, many Byzantine cities were reduced to fortresses in order to survive foreign pressures, decreasing intercultural connections even further (*Byzantium,* 42).

[88] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* referring to the work of Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of the New Rome,* 129f.

Aristotle. Most of these heirs preserved the books, but squandered their value."[89] Colish reminds us of the pressure of imperial centrality still in great effect during this time: "During the period of intellectual decline between the seventh and ninth centuries, cultural production of all kinds shrank, indicating that Byzantine scholars and writers had not found ways of carrying out their activities by means of grass-roots organizations."[90]

Rubenstein continues this train of thought as he coxes his readers to explore the great possibilities of the Byzantine Empire in regard to continuing the Greek philosophical tradition, saying, "one might have expected a vigorous growth of philosophy and science. But this is precisely where intellectual history takes one of its strangest turns. One could call this tale 'The Murder of Lady Philosophy.'"[91]

The tale is well known. Hypatia was a well-established neo-Platonist Alexandrian, famous throughout the East for her wisdom. Although she remained a pagan, many of her students were Christians. Through a series of complicated relationships and theological disputations, Hypatia was accused of anti-Christian connections and was violently killed by a mob of Christian men. "Clearly the Byzantine realm was becoming a dangerous place for non-Christians and philosophers to live. This incident in Alexandria led to further problems. Alexandria became a kind of "orthodoxy" center and arbiter of correct theology. When the Christians in Antioch debated the Alexandrians about yet another nuance concerning

[89] Ibid., 99.

[90] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400,* 123.

[91] Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children,* 68.

the nature of Christ, the Alexandrians were ready for a fight. The Antiochenes were inclined to follow Aristotle lead and emphasize the human side of Jesus while the Alexandrians emphasized His divinity. The Antiochene view, called Nestorianism (Nestorius was one of the main supporters of this doctrine), concluded that Jesus Christ had two natures, one human and one divine. Both reason and faith dictate that these natures be separate and distinct. Alarmed by the humanistic tendencies of the Antiochene theologians, the Alexandrians convened a council in 431 to resolve the issue. The Antiochenes prevailed, with the Emperor's blessing or at least indifference, and Nestorianism was condemned and Nestorius exiled. (Interestingly, the view of the Alexandrians, later called Monophysitism, was also condemned!) But the point of this historical episode, according to Rubenstein, confirms the "murder" of Lady Philosophy. "Despite the survival of Roman authority in Constantinople, the same shift from this-worldly to otherworldly concerns that marked post-Roman thinking in the West occurred in the East as well, although it took place more sporadically and slowly."[92] Rubenstein continues, "Many of the empire's independent thinkers, both Christian and pagan . . . left for Mesopotamia and Persia, where scholars could pursue their researches without fear of meeting the fate of Hypatia or Nestorius."[93]

While the East did continue to read Plato and Aristotle, the above examples show that the trend was conservative at best. "They commented endlessly on the

[92] Ibid., 77.

[93] Ibid.

learning inherited from the past, but almost never doubted this learning or tried to move beyond it."[94] The reasons for this conservatism can be looked at in two related areas. First, "it was a result of the people's passionate interest in matters of faith and their inclination to use philosophy, if at all, as a stick with which to beat their theological opponents."[95] Philosophy's primary function was not exploration of unexplored speculative thought, it was rather to bolster the presuppositions already inculcated within the Christian tradition. Faith always trumped reason. "Thus, although the Greek apologists and church fathers, all thoroughly educated in classical rhetoric and philosophy, recast theology in classical form with no difficulty, a separation between secular and religious thought . . . developed in the post-patristic period."[96] Second, Byzantine culture was maintained by a top-down, Christian control-oriented social structure that, through sheer weigh of tradition and stability, squashed the life out of creative use of philosophy, for fear that it could undo the comfortable and known status quo. Angold comments, concerning the new editions of classical texts that appeared with increasing frequency from the turn of the ninth

[94] Artz, The Mind of the Middle Ages, 111.

[95] Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children, 76-77*.

[96] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400,* 115. In defense of this kind of conservatism, Downey asserts: "This was not a deadening process, but the practice of a technique of education which had been tried for a long time and was generally acknowledged to be what was needed (though there were in antiquity critics of some details of the system). It was on this basis that the Byzantine State—including the Church—felt that it had both a responsibility and a practical advantage in keeping alive the classical past out of which it had grown without a break. The custody by the Church of the Scriptures and of the orthodox faith was the basic responsibility; and within this task both the Church and the State thought of themselves as the direct heirs—in language, race, geographical location, law, and government—of the ancient tradition which had been infused and transformed by Christianity. Respect for the past, which was felt to be a natural part of the present, was one of the characteristic sources of strength of Byzantine Christianity," Downey, "The Byzantine Church and the Presentness of the Past," 94.

century offering the educated man a vast range of knowledge and experience: "This posed a threat to imperial authority, which rested on divine sanction but had little or no control over knowledge derived from the classical past. Political regimes have always found it expedient to control the past."[97] Laughlin adds, "Presumably . . . these teachers [at the Byzantine established colleges] presented the treatises [of Aristotle, for example] in the same way they presented other ancient pagan writings: as literature, not as a source of philosophy that is a guide to living."[98] Burstein says, ". . . a Byzantine intellectual must not forget that 'Greek wisdom' was the 'outside learning,' tolerated since St. Basil only to the extent that it served as useful preparation for the study of the 'inside learning,' Christian theology."[99] To forget this principle would be to expose oneself to swift punishment.

As long as a "moderated" kind of training in Greek philosophy was maintained the Church and State would not interfere. These kinds of works then were not generally "burned"; there was no need for this kind of reaction because a stronger reaction could more easily be made. "Such manuscripts [Greek philosophy] were not

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[97] Angold, *Byzantium,* 139. Angold adds this further comment, "Byzantium did not display the cultural dynamism of either Islam or of the medieval West. Its public face was far too rigid and hidebound," Ibid., 143.

[98] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 93. Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 275- 339) was a bishop of Caesarea in Palestina and is often referred to as the father of Church history because of his work in recording the history of the early Christian church and forging unity among proto-orthodox advocates. Eusebius wrote a 15-volume work titled *Praeparatio Evangelica* ("Preparation for the Gospel"), which attempts to prove the excellence of Christianity over every pagan religion and philosophy. Eusebius demonstrates that Plato borrowed from Moses' ideas, so any value of studying Plato is downgraded to mere commentary on already existing truth of Hebrew origin.

[99] Burstein, "The Greek Tradition," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 49. See too D.M. Nicol, "The Byzantine Church and Hellenic Learning in the Fourteenth Century," *Studies in Church History* 5 (1969): 24-25.

a threat to the Church or State in a culture that denied their fundamental *value.* The Church sometimes discouraged the study of ancient writings and usually *devalued* their content, but seldom banned them."[100]

Colish makes this strong observation:

> The single most important factor accounting for the unique uses which Byzantium made of these resources [including the Greek classical tradition] is the unbroken continuity of central imperial rule . . . its intellectual leadership came increasingly from the capital and the imperial court, which determined the character of cultural patronage. Habituated to directives and funding from above, Byzantine thinkers developed a mindset that *precluded* [emphasis mine] the establishment of autonomous institutions for the creation and dissemination of ideas independent of imperial policy.[101]

The Greek Church, and in fact the entire Byzantine educational tradition, became sterile and attention was devoted to the preservation of the classics rather than to creative activity. The chief concern of the Church was the transmission and teaching of the Bible and of the tradition of the Fathers; only secondarily was the Hellenic literary and intellectual heritage looked upon as something to be preserved with care and handed on. The Greek Christian Byzantines, like their predecessors in the pagan Graeco-Roman world, looked upon the intellectual and literary achievements of Greece as the highest productions of their kind, of the human spirit, and as achievements that were of permanent and universal value in the study of humankind. But these works were now viewed as a subordinate adjunct to Christian teaching, rather than as the sum of human knowledge, as they had been considered in pre-Christian times. "In the Greek-speaking world of what at any one time remained

[100] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 94.

[101] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400,* 113.

of the Byzantine Empire, Greek philosophy became largely lost in a variety of Christian trappings."[102]

Laughlin states that three key steps are important for any philosophical school to be advanced into future generations, each step taking the process forward in more usable ways.[103] Step One involves simply preserving the original works of a philosopher. Step Two requires that commentators beyond the time of the original philosopher write explanations about the original works. Step Three moves to an active and purposeful integration of the original ideas into current philosophical thought and activity, remaining true to the first premises but creating evolving hybrids as new ideas are interfaced into the discussion. From our discussion in this chapter, it is clear that Step Three was seldom if ever accomplished during the Byzantine period, with the exception of the neo-Platonists. Step Two was accomplished only in isolated instances and often controlled environments. Step One, preservation of manuscripts was maintained, but even this process was significantly slowed when compared to pre-Byzantine periods.[104]

Let's now summarize the key points related to the connection of Christianity and Byzantium:

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[102] Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity*, 51.

[103] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 84.

[104] See, for example, Laughlin's chart of the number of copies made of Aristotle's treatises on logic between 300 B.C. and A.D. 700, Ibid, 86. "The significance of Constantinople in western civilization is great. It preserved so much of classical literature through the Middle Ages when it was virtually lost in the West. Of the Greek classics known today, at least seventy-five percent are known through Byzantine copies. The flow of manuscripts from East to West had begun before 1200, but it reached its high point in the 14th and 15th centuries," Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World,* 77. Note, however, the lateness of this transferal.

- The Greek philosophical treatises were saved by the Byzantines, but used conservatively and in noncreative ways.[105]
- The Greek philosophy schools were largely controlled by the imperial cult that was in turn controlled by Christian interests.
- The Greek philosophers were devalued as unoriginal and only secondarily used when they could help support theological disputation.
- The work of philosophy in the Byzantine Empire was not a scientific or reason-based exploration of reality; its purpose was to support the development of theology and to show the superiority of Christianity.
- Greek philosophy was still labeled "pagan" even when used, showing a strong negative bias among Byzantine culture.
- The gap between secular and sacred widened, as did the cultures of scholar and layman.[106]

So, while Byzantium kept the Greek philosophical tradition alive, its viability as a movement to be handed to future generations outside of its sphere of influence is in jeopardy. The way in which Greek philosophy is handled can hardly be described as healthy or holistic or fully faithful to its original composers.[107] This internal

[105] On the first part of this statement, R.R. Bolgar says, "The fact remains that if the Eastern Empire had not survived, most of what we know about ancient Greece would have perished," "The Greek Legacy," in *The Legacy of Greece,* ed. Finley, 446.

[106] Especially seen in the changes in Greek language between scholar and layman. See Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400,* 113-115.

[107] See Cyril Mango, "Discontinuity with the Classical Past in Byzantium," *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition: University of Birmingham Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies—1979* (Birmingham, 1981), 50-51.

problem will now be compounded exponentially by the next factor to be considered—how will any transmission of Greek intellectual foundations find their way to the West, in any form, when in fact the East and West are divided? To that question, we now turn.

4.42 The East-West Schism

There had always existed a natural division between the east and west portions of the Roman Empire, which I have already alluded to earlier in this chapter. With the transfer of the center of gravity from the West to the East and the consequent gradual suppression of the Latin language by the Greek, this division became critical. "However much cross-fertilization there may have been over the centuries, however common bilingualism may have been among the educated elite, there always remained two distinct cultures: one Latin and the other Greek."[108] The point of departure of this process, which determined the entire later history of the Roman Empire, lies undoubtedly in the founding of the new capital city, Constantinople, (A.D. 326) and in the definite partition of the Empire it into western and eastern halves (A.D. 395) that arose from it. This sealed the permanent separation of the Greek East from the Latin West and was also the fundamental reason for the estrangement that soon followed between the Greek and the Latin Christians. Over the centuries, this estrangement grew to become a deep-seated aversion resulting in open enmity in innumerable political and ecclesiastical squabbles. The linguistic and

[108] Angold, *Byzantium***,** 96.

cultural dualism had already existed before Constantine and Theodosius. However, it was only after the founding of New Rome and the partition of the Empire that it received its official confirmation. It was on this basis that the division could grow unhindered. The contrast was especially promoted and strengthened by the rapid growth of the new capital city, which conferred on the Greek or Hellenized half of the Empire a political and geographical, and soon even a religious, social, literary, and artistic priority coupled with the corresponding collapse of the western part of the Empire, including the fall of Rome.

The split between East and West was focused after the rise of Christianity on how Latin and Greek Church centers viewed orthodox faith and practice. In the early church of the first century, leadership for cities or regions was given to a bishop; each major city had one bishop. Soon, bishops in key cities attained greater status than other bishops and eventually the bishop of Rome gained more power and authority in the West, first gaining status of a "first among equals," later as the Pope or head of the Church. The reasons why the bishop of Rome gained such power are many. Peter, the "apostle specially commissioned by Jesus," ministered and was martyred in Rome. Both Peter and Paul were connected to Rome. The strong leader Cyprian advanced the cause of the bishop of Rome. Rome was the early center of persecution and gained recognition through this. Paul wrote his longest and maybe most important letter in the New Testament to Rome. The largest church by 100 was in Rome. Rome, of course, was the capitol of Roman Empire until the fourth century. The Pope had more autonomy than his counterpart in the East (the Patriarch of

Constantinople) because Rome later had no ruling Emperor while Constantinople always had a usually meddling Emperor in the foreground or background of church issues. Finally, Rome was a center of orthodoxy in its earliest years. But the East continued to view all bishops on a more or less equal basis and never granted the recognition to the bishop of Rome that the West did.

As this difference in opinion in authority in the Church developed, several other factors made the division between the Latin and Greek churches more apparent. The West was more practical minded, the East more theological and philosophical. The West did not allow clergy to marry, the East did allow clergy to marry. The West used Latin, the East used Greek in worship. The West added a phrase to the Nicene creed "the *Filioque* ('and the Son') clause;" the East was never consulted and never approved of this theologically significant change. (Photius charged the West with heresy when they added this phrase.) The West celebrated Easter on a Sunday, the East celebrated on whatever day Easter fell. The West allowed images in churches, the East only two-dimensional icons.[109] The West tried to interfere in Eastern Church appointments, greatly angering the East.

The "last straw" occurred when the Western Church insisted on using unleavened bread in Communion, while the East refused. Both said they were right

[109] This is an allusion to the iconoclast movement within the Eastern Orthodox churches that proved to be a key point of separation between East and West. See Angold, *Byzantium,* 70-101.

and had authority to make such a decision. In 1054, both West and East leaders excommunicated (anathematized) each other and the split (schism) was complete.[110]

The Schism of 1054 merely gave official status to a split that had unofficially occurred centuries before. The Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church were separated theologically, but this idealistic division resulted in a genuine divide between the East and the West that affected every part of life. The greatest indignity of all happened during the fourth Crusade in 1204. The Emperor in Constantinople called on his former European cousins to assist him in resisting the Moslem advance on his city.[111] The Europeans marched east to save Constantinople and the Holy Land from the infidels but this Crusade was sidetracked and Constantinople itself was taken was taken by Roman Christians from Europe! The Pope took over the Greek Orthodox eastern area for about 50 years. It has been often described as one of the most profitable and disgraceful sacks of a city in history. The crusaders inflicted a horrible and savage sacking on Constantinople for three days, during which many ancient and medieval Roman and Greek works were either stolen or destroyed. Despite their oaths and the threat of excommunication, the Crusaders ruthlessly and systematically violated the city's holy sanctuaries, destroying, defiling, or stealing all they could lay hands on; nothing was spared. "Fires raged across the city, destroying many manuscripts. To show the superiority of swordsmen over

[110] Tia M. Kolbaba, "Byzantine Perceptions of Latin Religious 'Errors': Themes and Changes from 850 to 1350," in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World,* ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh. (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), 117-143.

[111] Ralph-Johannes Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States, 1096-1204,* trans. J.C. Morris and Jean E. Ridings (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993; originally published in 1988).

'scribblers' [Byzantine copyists], victorious crusaders marched through the city holding aloft pen, paper, and inkwell."[112] Stephen Marrone says of this event, "Here lies the origin of what is seen today as western global hegemony."[113]

Speros Vryonis gives a vivid account of the sack of Constantinople by the Frankish and Venetian Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade:

> The Latin soldiery subjected the greatest city in Europe to an indescribable sack. For three days they murdered, raped, looted and destroyed on a scale which even the ancient Vandals and Goths would have found unbelievable. Constantinople had become a veritable museum of ancient and Byzantine art, an emporium of such incredible wealth that the Latins were astounded at the riches they found. Though the Venetians had an appreciation for the art which they discovered (they were themselves semi-Byzantines) and saved much of it, the French and others destroyed indiscriminately, halting to refresh themselves with wine, violation of nuns, and murder of Orthodox clerics. The Crusaders vented their hatred for the Greeks most spectacularly in the desecration of the greatest Church in Christendom. They smashed the silver iconostasis, the icons and the holy books of Hagia Sophia, and seated upon the patriarchal throne a whore who sang coarse songs as they drank wine from the Church's holy vessels. The estrangement of East and West, which had proceeded over the centuries, culminated in the horrible massacre that accompanied the conquest of Constantinople. The Greeks were convinced that even the Turks, had they taken the city, would not have been as cruel as the Latin Christians. The defeat of Byzantium, already in a state of decline, accelerated political degeneration so that the Byzantines eventually became an easy prey to the Turks. The crusading movement thus resulted, ultimately, in the victory of Islam, a result which was of course the exact opposite of its original intention.[114]

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[112] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 100. Laughlin notes that he has used the following references in his study of the fall of Constantinople: R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries: From the Carolingian Age to the End of the Renaissance* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954); John Edwin Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship, Vol. 1: From the Sixth Century B.C. to the End of the Middle Ages* (New York: Hafner Publishing, 1958); and N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983).

[113] Stephen P. Marrone, "Medieval Philosophy in Context," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy,* ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 22.

[114] Speros Vryonis, *Byzantium and Europe* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), 152.

The Latins and the Greeks were both proud of their own diverse heritages, both convinced beyond a shadow of doubt their brand of Christianity is correct, both intent on maintaining the glory of the old Roman Empire, both suspicious of the other's political and military intentions, and both so busy protecting their own turf that striving for formal connections between each other took low priority. Sharing resources, including intellectual, found little support or opportunity. "It is emblematic of the gulf between east and west that, following the schism between the Greek and Roman churches in 1054, Byzantine theologians showed little interest in the work of their western compeers and that translations of their writings into Greek were rare and made late."[115] Sarton, in the 1950s, describes the separation in this way: "One often speaks today of the Iron Curtain which separates eastern from Western Europe. That curtain existed throughout a good part of the Middle Ages between the Greek and Latin worlds."[116] Thus, it can be seen that the great writings of the classical era, particularly those of Greece, were never completely lost to the Western world. They were always available to the Byzantines, and to those few Western peoples in cultural and diplomatic contact with the Eastern Empire. "However, during most of the Middle Ages these contacts were few and tenuous, and, for all practical purposes, scarcely significant."[117]

[115] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition: 400-1400,* 127.

[116] Sarton, *The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East,* 15.

[117] Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World,* 75.

It is time to conclude this pivotal chapter. The West has virtually lost contact with its Greek foundations. The East has placed such restrictions on its use of Greek works that they are for all practical purposes museum pieces. In addition, even these museum pieces will not easily find their way to the West because the East-West connection has been shut down by the inability of the Latin and Greek churches to find common ground for compromise. Dialogue between Europe and Constantinople is, for this time period, disrupted.

So, my research question now comes into complete focus at this point. How will the West recover Greek philosophical foundations that it will use and profit from during the Italian Renaissance? The answer to that intriguing question, which has prompted my research and this dissertation will come from again an unlikely turn of history. To find the road to the West, we must travel East, outside the boundaries of both Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire.

Chapter 5

The Connection between Greek Philosophy and the Islamic Empire

5.1 The Origin and Expansion of Islam[1]

During the vacuum of power that occurred in and around the area of the Mediterranean basin once controlled by the Roman Empire, with the splintering of the West sections and the shrinking of the East portion, a new Empire sprang to life in the seventh century and quickly swallowed those territories unprotected by Byzantium or Frankish armies. The Muslims, energized by a new faith and founder, by a fervent desire to convert the world to their ideology, and no doubt by a hope of plundering the wealth and resources of cities and states that lay in their path, rapidly expanded from their homeland in Arabia into Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean, North Africa, and even as far Spain at the southwestern corner of Europe.

Islam had its origin in the Arabian peninsula, an out-of-the-way location in the history of civilization. It was hardly an area where you would expect a major cultural group would find it beginning—not located on any major river systems, not abundant in natural resources, not well connected to the Mediterranean centers of population. This area of inhospitable desert forced people there to struggle with basic survival.

[1] The following historical outline of the rise of Islam is based on several basic sources including: John Esposito, ed., *Oxford History of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); P.M. Holt and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Cambridge History of Islam,* vol. 1. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Robert Payne, *The History of Islam* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1992, originally published in 1959).

Semitic Bedouin tribes wandered from oasis to oasis with their herds and flocks. Intertribal conflict was common; no dominant group or religion harnessed the social energy of the region.

One of these tribesmen, Muhammad (570-632) came to the forefront of this region. Originally a common camel driver, by marrying into a rich family, he was enabled to spend time in religious meditation rather than in the hard work of maintaining a desert-derived living. Beginning in 610, and continuing for the last 23 years of his life, Muhammad, who had had contact with both Judaism and Christianity during his travels, reported receiving revelations from God. The content of these revelations, known as the Qur'an,[2] was memorized and then transcribed by his companions. Muslims view him not as the creator of a new religion, but as the restorer of the original, uncorrupted monotheistic faith of Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. In Muslim tradition, Muhammad is viewed as the last and the greatest in a series of prophets—as the man closest to perfection, the possessor of all virtues. Muslims regard the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the words and deeds of Muhammad) as the fundamental sources of Islam. Islamic tradition holds that Judaism and Christianity distorted the messages of these prophets over time, either in interpretation or in text, or both, and that Islam was introduced into the world to correct these errors of the basic monotheistic faith. The Qur'an calls Jews and Christians "People of the Book," and distinguishes them from polytheists, although Muslims feel Christianity has departed from strict monotheism in its doctrine of the

[2] It is difficult to find a consistent way to represent Arabic words in an English text. Generally, I will not try to provide a full diacritical transliteration of Arabic words but will resort to an approximate English equivalent. I will consistently use the form Qur'an rather than Koran, out of respect.

Trinity and the incarnation of Christ. Islamic theology says that all of God's messengers since Adam preached the message of Islam—submission to the will of the one God. Islam is described in the Qur'an as "the primordial nature upon which God created mankind."[3] The word "Islam" means "submission," or the total surrender of oneself to God (Arabic: Allah). An adherent of Islam is known as a Muslim, meaning "one who submits (to God)." Islam shares with Christianity the call to vigorous missionary activity.

Muslims consider the Qur'an to be the literal word of God, believing that the verses of the Qur'an were revealed to Muhammad by God through the angel Gabriel on many occasions between the years 610 and his death in 632. Though the Qur'an was written down by Muhammad's companions, the prime method of transmission was oral. It was compiled in the time of Abu Bakr, the first caliph (or successors of Muhammad), and was standardized in the time of Uthman, the third caliph. Based on textual evidence, the Qur'an has not changed over the years.

The Qur'an is divided into 114 suras, or chapters, which combined contain 6,236 ayat, or poetic verses, with the longest chapters at the beginning and the shortest at the end. The chronologically earlier suras, revealed at Mecca, are primarily concerned with ethical and spiritual topics, while the later Medinan suras mostly discuss social and moral issues.

The word "Qur'an" means "recitation." To Muslims, the Qur'an is perfect only as revealed in the original Arabic; translations are necessarily deficient because

[3] Qur'an 30:30.

of language differences, the fallibility of translators, and the impossibility of preserving the original's inspired style. Translations are, therefore, regarded only as commentaries on the Qur'an, or "interpretations of its meaning," not as the Qur'an itself.[4] "The absolute centrality of the Koran to the religious life of Muslims and its use in the teaching of basic literacy ensured its literary no less than theological influence on all subsequent Muslim authors,"[5] including Arabic philosophers.

During the time of his divine revelations, Muhammad preached to the people of Mecca, imploring them to abandon polytheism. Although some converted to Islam, Muhammad and his followers were persecuted by the Meccan authorities. After thirteen years of preaching, Muhammad and his few followers emigrated to the city of Medina, in 622.[6] There Muhammad established his political and religious authority. At the same time, Meccan trade routes were cut off as Muhammad brought surrounding desert tribes under his control. By 629, Muhammad was victorious in the conquest of Mecca. By the time of his death in 632, he ruled the entire Arabian peninsula, uniting the tribes of Arabia into a singular Arab Muslim religious polity. His followers were soon ready to expand outside of Arabia.

With Muhammad's death, disagreement broke out over who should succeed him as leader of the Muslim community. Umar ibn al-Khattab, a well-known

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[4] Colin Turner, *Islam: the Basics* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 15.

[5] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 132.

[6] The year of this flight, known as the Hegira, became the first year of the Muslim calendar. I will continue to use Western dates throughout this dissertation, even when referring to Muslim individuals, for sake of clarity.

companion of Muhammad, nominated Abu Bakr, who was Muhammad's friend and collaborator. Abu Bakr was made the first caliph. This choice was disputed by some of Muhammad's companions, who held that Ali ibn Abi Talib, his cousin and son-in-law, had been designated his successor. Abu Bakr's death in 634 resulted in the succession of Umar as the caliph, followed by Uthman ibn al-Affan and finally Ali ibn Abi Talib. These four are known as the "Rightly Guided Caliphs" by Sunnis. Under them, the territory under Muslim rule expanded deeply into Persian Empire and Byzantine territories, including northeast Africa, the eastern Mediterranean region (for example, Palestine and Syria) up to but not including Asia Minor, and extending to the east as far as the present-day eastern border of Iran.

When Umar was assassinated in 644, the election of Uthman as successor was met with increasing opposition. In 656, Uthman was also killed, and Ali assumed the position of caliph. Ali was assassinated by a rogue Muslim tribe in 661. Following this, Muawiyah I, who was governor of Levant,[7] seized power and began the Umayyad dynasty,[8] moving the caliphate to Damascus. Syria would remain the base of Umayyad power until the end of the dynasty. The Umayyad dynasty prevailed for seventy years, and was able to add to the Muslim territories northwest Africa, what is

[7] The Levant was an imprecise geographical term historically referring to a large area in the Middle East south of the Taurus Mountains, bounded by the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and by the northern Arabian Desert and Upper Mesopotamia to the east.

[8] According to tradition, the Umayyad family and Muhammad were both descended from a common ancestor. The two families are therefore considered to be different clans of the same tribe. However Shia Islam believes that Umayya was an adopted son and so, because of no direct blood relation, he cannot be a successor to Muhammad. Sunnis believe that leadership in Islam is based on shura, the decisions of the council (which renders the question of Umayyad ancestry essentially moot), while Shia believe leadership must be based on blood lines directly connected with Muhammad.

today Spain/Portugal and further east to the Indus River.[9] Even the city of Constantinople was attacked during this period by Muslim forces. Within a century of Muhammad's first recitations of the Qur'an, an Islamic empire stretched from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to Central Asia in the east. "The territory of the Muslim faith was extended by the sword. In this, the conquerors were as lucky as they were brave. Their victories were due not so much to their own strength and to their enthusiasm which was considerable, as to weakness and disunion of their adversaries."[10] Egypt and the Fertile Crescent region were reunited with Persia and India for the first time since Alexander the Great and for a period of time much longer than that of Alexander's relatively brief exploits. This time of empire building is sometimes labeled as the time of "Pax Islamica"—a direct reference to the time of the more well-known "Pax Romana," when, by its sheer weight of influence and control, Rome ensured a measure of peace within its domain so that the business of "living" could be pursued.[11]

This expansion did not go unnoticed by Christian-led lands.

> The crescent-shaped expansion to the West and the East threatened Christianity with a great pincers, but expansion at the eastern end of the crescent was stopped by the brave defense of the Eastern empire under Leo the Isaurian [the Byzantine emperor] in 718. Muslim expansion on the

[9] See Appendix F.

[10] Sarton, *The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East,* 24-25. The Byzantine and Persian empires had been tottering for centuries and indeed they had weakened one another in the period before Islam appeared.

[11] The fundamental work of A.M. Watson shows that with the opening of ancient trade routes to the Far East that agricultural stability and innovation flooded the Middle East providing wealth and strength to the Islamic Empire (*Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World* [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983]).

> Western wing of the crescent was halted by the defeat of the Muslims by the armies of Charles Martel at Tours [in central France] in 732.[12]

Both the eastern and western sections of the Christian church were weakened by these encounters with the Muslims, but the Eastern churches suffered most. Byzantium lost its hold on North Africa, Egypt, Syria, and the Holy Land, all locations of strong centers of Christian influence. We will see how some of these former Byzantine areas figured into later Islamic contact with Greek philosophical sources.

The descendants of Muhammad's uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, rallied discontented, poor Arabs, and some Shia against the Umayyads and overthrew them,[13] inaugurating the Abbasid dynasty in 750. Under the Abbasids, Islamic civilization flourished in the "Islamic Golden Age," with its capital at the cosmopolitan city of Baghdad. During this time, expansion of the Muslim world continued, by both conquest and peaceful proselytism into sub-Saharan West Africa, Inner Asia, the Malay archipelago, and, especially significant for our purposes, Sicily and southern Italy.[14] While shrewd leaders in their own right, the Abbasid caliphs

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[12] Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries,* 167. "It did seem possible, as Muslim armies stood poised at the passes of the Pyrenees and at the gates of Constantinople, that the Umayyads might possibly reconstitute the unity of the old Roman world in a new Islamic guise," Angold, *Byzantium,* 69.

[13] Spain, however, known in Arabic as al-Andalus or Andalusia, remained in Ummayad hands. The only surviving member of the Umayyad royal family, which had been all but annihilated, ultimately made his way to Spain where he established himself as an independent Emir (Abd ar-Rahman I, 756). In 929, Abd ar-Rahman III assumed the title of Caliph, establishing Cordoba as a rival to Baghdad as the legitimate capital of the Islamic Empire.

[14] *Dar al-Islam* (literally "house of submission") is a term used to refer to those lands under Islamic rule. In the orthodox tradition of Islam, the world is divided into two components: *dar al-Islam,* the house of peace and *dar al-Harb,* the house of war or those lands outside of Muslim influence.

modeled their administration on that of the Sassanids (Persians), into whose former territory they moved their capital.[15] The combination of Arab vigor and Persian stability provided the Muslims with great ability to expand its intellectual assets.

By the late 9th century, the Abbasid caliphate began to fracture, as various regions gained increasing levels of autonomy. Across North Africa, Persia, and Central Asia, emirates formed as provinces broke away. The monolithic Arab empire gave way to a more religiously homogenized Muslim world. By 1055, the Seljuk Turks had eliminated the Abbasids as a military power, nevertheless they continued to respect the Abbasid caliph's authority. The Golden Age saw new legal, philosophical, and religious developments. The Islamic civilization during this period of the Middle Ages is considered by many to have been the most advanced in the world, certainly in the Mediterranean region.

Starting in the 9th century, Muslim conquests in Christian Europe began to be reversed. The *Reconquista* was launched against Muslim principalities in Iberia, and Muslim Italian possessions were lost to the Normans. Beginning in the 11th century, a series of wars known as the Crusades brought the eastern Muslim world into conflict with Christendom. Successful at first in their capturing of the Holy Land, which resulted in the establishment of the Crusader states, Crusader gains in the Holy Land were reversed by later Muslim generals such as Saladin, who recaptured Jerusalem during the Second Crusade. The Mongol Empire put an end to the Abbasid

[15] One Abbasid caliph is even quoted as saying: "The Persians ruled for a thousand years and did not need us Arabs even for a day. We have been ruling them for one or two centuries and cannot do without them for an hour," cited by Bertold Spuler, *The Muslim World, The Age of the Caliphs.* vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), 29.

dynasty at the Battle of Baghdad in 1258. Meanwhile in Egypt, the Mamluks took control in an uprising in 1250. The Seljuk Turks rapidly declined in the second half of the 13th century. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the Ottoman Empire was established with a series of conquests that included the Balkans, parts of Greece, and western Anatolia. In 1453, the Ottomans laid siege to Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium. The Byzantine fortress fell shortly after, officially ending the Byzantine Empire and the last remnants of the original Roman Empire.

The story of the rise of the Islamic Empire is generally understated yet wholly remarkable. That this new religion-culture could so quickly overpower such a large area of land and people groups for such a long period time places them in the company of the Greek and Roman empires that preceded them. "The rise of Islam is the most striking and important event of the Middle Ages. Initially, it could be explained only in apocalyptical terms. Its speed and completeness still stagger belief."[16] Angold goes on to comment, "The Islamic achievement was, in some ways, still more remarkable, since its orbit encompassed so much a greater span than the Roman Empire."[17] That this period of history finds so little commentary in Western history narratives is one of the reasons for this current research. The Islamic Empire was a truly amazing civilization of the Middle Ages and demands a significant part in the story of the development of Western civilization. I agree with Sarton's evaluation, "The achievements of the Arabic speaking peoples between the ninth and twelfth

[16] Angold, *Byzantium*, 45.

[17] Ibid., 69.

centuries are so great as to baffle our understanding."[18] Southern takes this thought even further: "The rise of Islam as a political force is the most astonishing fact in the history of institutions."[19]

5.2 Greek Philosophy: From Syriac to Arabic

In the last chapter, we saw that Christian, Greek-speaking Byzantine scholars were the natural inheritors of the dwindling Greek philosophical tradition. We might have expected, had we been living in that age, that Byzantium would have been the natural champion of Plato and Aristotle. They shared history, culture, language, and had access to their work. "However, the leaders of the Orthodox Christian Church, centered in Constantinople, did not value a philosophy of reason. For over 800 years [after the legalization of Christianity] . . . they stifled the study of philosophy and the application of logic."[20] Bolgar states, "Byzantium had more to offer than the Arabs. It stood closer to antiquity; and yet by a curious chance most of what the age learnt about the ancient world came through Arabic."[21] The path of Greek philosophical transmission now takes a strange turn, to Syria, and then to Islam, a civilization with no inherent roots in the classical tradition.

When Christianity began in the first century, it quickly spread in all directions of the compass. While in the New Testament we hear primarily about the western

[18] Sarton, *The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East,* 35.

[19] Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages,* 9.

[20] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 104.

[21] Bolgar, "The Greek Legacy," in *The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal,* ed. Finley, 450.

direction of Christian evangelism, there was also a strong move toward the east as well. Some of these groups in the east later developed doctrines about the nature of Christ and God that were considered heretical to orthodox Christians in Constantinople and Rome. These groups were persecuted, either in word or deed, by Christian authorities and were eventually isolated by the Christian society at large, especially as Persian control came over the areas of occupation, for example in the region of Syria.[22] Other Christians joined these outcasts, as further theological discussions and councils placed groups like Nestorians and Monophysites in jeopardy within the Byzantine-controlled community. These eastern communities, having both a Christian background as well as remnants of a Hellenized culture from the time when Greece and then Rome occupied these border areas, found more freedom to express and explore their theological-philosophical ideas. "The political and geographical isolation of the Byzantines . . . shielded these Christian communities under Muslim rule . . . from the dark ages and aversion to Hellenism into which Byzantium slid in the seventh and eighth centuries."[23]

Not only did Christian heretics find sanctuary in the East, but pagan scholars formerly within the Byzantine arena also at times found room to practice philosophy in the eastern sections of the Mediterranean. There were also other non-Christian religions that flourished in these areas, adding an eclectic atmosphere to this thinking

[22] An interesting irony of history—Antioch of Syria was the location of the "second city of Christianity," after Jerusalem, and the launching point for the missionary travels of Paul, the most prolific writer in the New Testament. When centers of orthodoxy moved to Constantinople and Rome, Antioch became associated with heresy not orthodoxy.

[23] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, 13.

community. The Sassanid Persian kings, who were at constant war with Byzantium, saw the opportunity to assure the loyalty of these displaced subjects and supported these Byzantine rejects, especially the Nestorians.

As early as 450, Syrian Christians began translating Greek writings into the Syriac language,[24] including works from the Greek philosophers. Their Hellenistic background, and the fact that Greek was still the *lingua franca* of much of this area and of Christianity itself, allowed them to move freely from Greek to their native Syrian language. When Persia (and Syria) was invaded and conquered by the marching Muslim armies in the 600s, these Christian translators and scholars continued their work in the schools and monasteries in the Syrian region. "For example, in the scriptorium of the Qinnesrin monastery in northern Syria, three translators produced Syriac copies of Porphyry's *Introduction to Aristotle's Categories,* as well as Aristotle's *Categories, Interpretation,* and *Prior Analytics.*"[25] Generally, Islam was tolerant of other faiths in their conquered territories as long as

[24] "Before Arabic, the first Semitic language into which the Greek philosophical texts were translated was Syriac," D'Ancona, "Greek into Arabic: Neoplatonism in translation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 18. Syriac is an Eastern Aramaic language that was once spoken across much of the Fertile Crescent. It was a major literary language throughout the Middle East from the second to the eighth century AD. It refers here specifically to the classical language of Edessa, which became the liturgical language of Syriac Christianity. It became the vehicle of Christianity and culture, spreading throughout Asia as far as Malabar and Eastern China and was the medium of communication and cultural dissemination for Arabs and, to a lesser extent, Persians. Primarily a Christian medium of expression, Syriac had a fundamental cultural and semantical influence on the development of Arabic, which replaced it towards the end of the eighth century. See Klaus Beyer, *The Aramaic Language: Its Distribution and Subdivisions,* trans. John F. Heale (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

[25] Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 12ff. See also S. Brock, "From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning," in *East of Byzantine: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period,* ed. N. Garsoian, T. Mathews, and R. Thompson (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1980), 17-34.

tribute was paid and subservience was observed, and these Christians were allowed to continue their work as Christians. "Terms of capitulation were arranged, including a covenant guaranteeing the faith, and somewhat limiting its public practice, of the subject peoples."[26] These eastern Christians adopted many of the views of the neo-Platonists from Antioch and Alexandria, now also under Islamic rule, as well as the logic of Aristotle. While these eastern Christians were still leery about full dialogue with Greek philosophy, there were more opportunities for this kind of dialogue to happen, since they lived outside the strict control of Byzantine authority. But as Christians, the tension between faith and reason still kept Greek philosophy "in check." Proba of Syria (425-475), Athanasius of Balad (646-696), and George ("Bishop to the Arabs") of Kufa[27] (674-724) are examples of these early Christian translators. The Syrian schools of Edessa and Nisibis, as well as the school in Qinnesrin, provided room in their curriculum to study and translate Greek philosophy.

Over a period of centuries, Syriac-Christian scholars developed five key points on the study of Greek philosophy that influenced the later Arab-Islamic study of this topic.[28]

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[26] F.E. Peters, "Hellenism in Islam," in *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Carol G. Thomas (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 79.

[27] Balad was located about 50 miles north of Baghdad. Kufa was located about 100 miles south of Baghdad. Though not technically in Syria, Athanasius and George worked in the Syriac language.

[28] According to Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 107.

- Arranging the nine branches of logic in the neo-Platonist order (introduction, categories, interpretation, prior analytics, posterior analytics, topics, sophistical refutations, rhetoric, and poetics.
- Esteeming the Alexandrian neo-Platonists' commentaries on the *Organon* (and adopting their method, scholasticism).
- Supporting neo-Platonist syncretism (the attempt to reconcile Platonism and Aristotelianism).
- Exposing students to the first four treatises of Aristotle (*Introduction, Categories, Interpretation,* and *Prior Analytics*).
- Promoting the study of logic as preparation for advanced studies (science, medicine, and theology).

Through schools, especially in Baghdad (the House of Wisdom) and Jundishapur[29] (the Academy), eastern Christians bequeathed these five essential philosophical elements to their Arabic scholar peers.[30] Though these eastern Christians were ultimately conservative in thought, they did allow the Greek philosophical tradition to move into the hands and minds of the Muslims in whose territories they lived.[31] Also, with the advent of Islam, these various scholastic centers

[29] Located in present-day southwest Iran.

[30] See G. Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1981).

[31] Here is an glimpse into school practice in Baghdad during this time, from the pen of the translator/scholar Hunain ibn Ishaq: "Our contemporary Christian colleagues gather every day in places of teaching known as σχολή (school) for [the study of] a leading text by the ancients. [We also] read the commentaries of the books by the ancients," Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 15.

could and did pursue conversations with each other, without worry or threat from "orthodox" supervisors. "Anti-Byzantinism thus becomes philhellenism"[32] within the growing Islamic Empire.

5.3 The Abbasid Dynasty Translation Movement

As the "Golden Age" of the Islamic Empire unfolded, under control of the Abbasid Dynasty with their capitol in Baghdad, wealthy Arabic readers increased the demand for Arabic translations of Greek writings. A strong and long literary tradition already existed in Arabic before the rise of Islam, and Arabic literature continued to flourish after its initiation. In the eastern Mediterranean, Arabic rapidly became the language of scholarly discourse, replacing Latin, Greek, Persian and Syriac.[33] "Whatever their political and religious positions might be, all Muslim rulers thought it important to support literature, which brought luster and entertainment to their courts . . . Writers built on the strong foundation of pre-Islamic literature with a notable cross-fertilization of the Arabic and Persian traditions."[34] Evidence of this strong literary tradition is widely acknowledged during the Abbasid period.

> Besides great libraries attached to the mosques and the larger schools, princes, nobles, and merchants had extensive private collections which they were usually willing to open to qualified scholars. We hear of a private library in Bagdad [sic], as early as the ninth century, that required a hundred and twenty

[32] A clever and insightful quote from Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 85.

[33] "During the Middle Ages, Arabic was truly the most universal language ever used, for it was spoken and written not only by people of many nations (East and West) but also (unlike Latin) by people of many faiths," Sarton, *The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East*, 34.

[34] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 132.

> camels to move it from one place to another. Another scholar of Bagdad refused to accept a position elsewhere because it would take four hundred camels to transport his books; the catalogue of this private library filled ten volumes. This is the more astonishing when it is realized that the library of the king of France in 1300 had only about four hundred titles.[35]

Gutas remarks that even though translations, of Greek works were being done in Damascus and in Syriac, the reasons for these translations and the purposes for which they were used, were different from what happened later in Baghdad. The Syrian work was still done within a Christian context and the place of Greek philosophy was still to some degree stigmatized. By moving the translation projects to Baghdad, away from Byzantine influences and into the heart of Islamic-Arabic culture, the translations of Plato and Aristotle took on new energy and direction. "The transfer of the caliphate from Damascus to central Iraq—i.e., from a Greek-speaking to a non-Greek-speaking area—had the paradoxical consequence of allowing the preservation of the classical Greek heritage which the Byzantines had all but extirpated."[36] This point cannot be stated too strongly—the Greek-Syriac-Arabic, and eventually Latin, translation success was significantly dependent on the Abbasid contribution to Islamic culture and its openness to Greek thought. Without that support, the Greek translation movement may have died in Syria, within a kind of intellectual cul-de-sac. Gutas emphasizes again the importance of the Islamic Empire over against the work of Syrian Christians alone: "There is a widespread misconception in the majority of works dealing with the transmission of Greek

[35] Artz, *The Mind of the Middle Ages,* 153. Part of the reason for this explosion of literary works and libraries was due to the invention of durable paper, which reached Baghdad in the eight century from China.

[36] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 20.

knowledge into Arabic that this was effected on the basis of pre-existing Syriac translations . . . Before the Abbisids, relatively few secular works had been transformed into Syriac."[37] The Syriac-speaking Christians contributed much of the technical skill needed in this translation movement, but the support and management of this movement was found within the context of Abbasid society itself.

Their Hellenized subjects in previously controlled Byzantine lands provided Islam with access to the classical tradition, as the traditional centers of education became incorporated into the Islamic Empire—Alexandria, Damascus, Jerusalem, Edessa, and Antioch. This literature was appropriated, but in a selective way. Classical fictional literature and political theory were not of interest to the Muslims. Greek science and philosophy were, at least in the early centuries. Of these last two areas, "the Arabs drank deeply from a number of Hellenic sources: from the secular and scientific Aristotelian tradition of Alexandria, from the later Platonism of Athens . . . and from the theological Hellenism that rested within the Christian tradition."[38]

During the time period from 450-750, only Greek to Syriac translations of Greek philosophy were active. "One should not suppose that early Arabic philosophers, any more than scholastic Christian philosophers, worked primarily through a direct and independent reading of [Greek philosophy]."[39] Beginning about

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[37] Ibid., 21-22.

[38] Peters, "Hellenism in Islam," *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 86.

[39] Adamson and Taylor, "Introduction, *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* 2. See also L.E. Goodman, "The Translation of Greek Materials into Arabic," in *Religion, Learning and Science in the Abbasid Period,* ed. M.J.L. Young, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 477-497.

810, we start to see translations of Greek philosophers from Syriac to Arabic; again most of these translators were Syrian Christians who had become acquainted with the sister language of Arabic. Some of these key translators included Timotheus (728-823), Yahya (Yuhanna) ibn al-Bitriq (770-830), Ayyub ibn al-Qasim of Raqqah (780-840), Hunain ibn Ishaq of Baghdad (809-877), Thabit ibn Qurra of Harran (834-901, the only non-Christian in this group), Ishaq ibn Hunain of Baghdad (845-910), Abu Bishr of Baghdad (870-940), and Yaya ibn Adi of Takrit (893-974).[40] These Syriac translators set high standards and used the following principles when taking a text from the original Greek:

- Write a Greek "critical text," by compiling a single copy after reviewing variant wording in several much older Greek manuscripts acquired in Alexandria, Harran, or Damascus.
- Translate the Greek critical text into Syriac. Sometimes this step was skipped and a Greek text was translated directly into Arabic, especially if a Syriac translation had not been completed earlier.
- Translate the Syriac copy into Arabic, not in a literal word-for-word manner but in a thought-for-thought approach, insuring better understanding for the end reader.[41]

[40] For historical information on these early translators see Nicholas Rescher, *The Development of Arabic Logic* (Pittsburg: University Press, 1964). For a more complete list of these translators see Myers, *Arabic Thought and the Western World,* Chapter 6.

[41] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 108. The task of translating philosophical writings into another language is incredibly difficult, requiring both linguistic and philosophical tools. While it might seem that a more literal approach to translation (*ad verbum*) would be preferable, translations

Translation is always a complex operation, and the same holds true when we talk about the Arabic translation movement during the Abbasid period. When considering how translations were made during this time frame, we must keep in mind the following set of variables: 1. The languages (including, but not exclusively Syriac) from which Arabic translation was made, 2. The integrity of the original manuscript, 3. How revisions of previous translations were used to make new translations, 4. Competency of the translator, 5. Complexity of the original work's ideas and structure, and, 6. The intended audience or readership of the translation.

This translation program, with the accession of the Abbasids to power, was truly a full social phenomenon, and not a mere accident of history and not the pet projects of a few scholars and leaders.[42] While it is true that later, Arabic philosophers would be moved toward the boundaries of intellectual thought, in its first period, several supportive factors can be outlined showing the depth to which the translation movement penetrated Islamic culture. There was a desire to learn. First, the translation movement lasted well over two centuries, a considerable period of time. Second, it was supported by the entire elite of Abbasid society; it was not the pet project of an isolated group of individuals. Third, it was subsidized by funds, both public and private. Fourth, it resulted in a meticulous methodology, initiated and sustained by the Hunain ibn Ishaq family of Baghdad resulting in a systematized approach to translation work. "The support for the translation movement cut across

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that are based on a thought-for thought methodology (*ad sensum*) are always better at communicating key ideas, while running the risk of adding layers of interpretation.

[42] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 2.

all lines of religious, sectarian, ethnic, tribal, and linguistic demarcation. Patrons were Arabs and non-Arabs, Muslims and non-Muslims, Sunnis and Shiites, generals and civilians, merchants and land-owners."[43]

Al-Mansur (712-775), the builder of Baghdad, the second in the line of Abbasid caliphs and the real founder of the policies that enabled the Abbasid state to flourish, is usually credited with initiating and maintaining the translation movement of Greek works into Arabic.[44] The Arabic historian al-Masudi (d. 956) quotes an earlier historian, al-Ahbari, who said about al-Mansur: "He was the first caliph to have books translated from foreign languages into Arabic [among them] books by Aristotle . . . These [translated books] were published among the people, who examined them and devoted themselves to knowing them."[45] The Andalusian historian, Said (d. 1070) reported:

> When God Almighty put an end to this dynasty [the Umauuads] by means of the [Abbasids] and directed the rule to the latter, people's ambitions revived from their indifference and their minds awoke from their sleep. The first among the Arabs who cultivated the sciences was the second caliph, Abu Gafar al-Mansur. He was—God have mercy on him—deeply attached to them and to their practitioners, being himself proficient in religious knowledge and playing a pioneering role in [promoting] philosophical knowledge.[46]

Part of the impetus for the Abbasid dynasty to pursue translation projects going back to the Greeks relates to the Persian view that when Alexander the Great

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[43] Ibid., 5.

[44] See Hugh Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate* (London: Croom Helm, 1981).

[45] Cited by Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 30-31, from al-Masudi, *Mugu ad-dahab,* ed. C. Pellat (Beirut: Universite Libanaise, 1965-79), sec. 3446.

[46] Ibid., 31, from Said al-Andalusi, T*abaqat al-umam,* ed. L. Cheikho (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1912), 47-48.

conquered their territory in the 300s B.C., he actually stole ancient Persian ideas[47] and transferred them to Greece. So when Greek works were translated into Arabic, they were in essence the original ideas of this region "coming home." Al-Kindi (see later in this chapter), from the Arab side of things, even devised a genealogy according to which Yunan, the so-called ancestor of the ancient Greeks (actually the Ionians; Yunan is an eponym of Iona) was presented as the brother of Qahtan, the originating ancestor of the Arabs, creating a similar connection as that claimed by the Persians. Whether these ancient connections were true or not, it is easy to see why the Abbasid dynasty, with its capital in the heart of the Persian homeland, would consider Greek-Arabic translations of extreme value. It is even evident why the Greek language was not considered significant to study in itself in regard to these Greek classics—Greek was not the original language of composition and deserved no special attention. Related to this assertion of ancient connection in the Middle East, al-Mansur's circularly constructed Baghdad was sometimes referred to as the "Round City," symbolizing centrality and control. Legend says that the doors of this city were derived from ancient sources including Solomon and the Pharaoh of Egypt. "Thus al-Mansur presented Baghdad not merely as a symbol of his indisputable rule but also of the Abbasid dynasty as the heir to the rich past of the Near East with its mosaic of various peoples, religions, and traditions."[48]

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[47] Going back to the time of Zoroaster himself, perhaps to the ninth-tenth centuries B.C. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia* (London: Curzon Press, 1997).

[48] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 52. See also J. Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

Later Abbasid leaders continued the translation process, and added to it. One of its important secondary purposes is seen clearly in anti-Byzantine and anti-Christian propaganda that was popular in Baghdad in the ninth century.[49] They used the rational reasoning processes of the Greeks to ridicule the Christian idea of Trinity, which sounded too much like polytheism to the Arab mind (and to which the Christians had a hard time explaining even to themselves), and the idea that God, in the person of Jesus Christ, could be a mere mortal "who urinates and defecates," again illogical to the Islamic mind which holds a high, transcendent view of a holy God. Al-Gahiz (d. 868), famous Arabic author, when talking about the logical inconsistencies of Christians regarding three-gods-in-one and a divine-human Son of God, remarks, "If we had not seen it with our own eyes and heard it with our own ears, we would not consider it true. We would not believe that [Christians could believe and take pride in such things]."[50]

In another lengthy quotation from al-Gahiz, the Arab writer criticizes Byzantium for its lack of intellectual prowess and its ignorance and lack of connection to Greek thinking, and in counter-perspective uplifts the Islamic ability and desire to be a culture worthy of the ancients.

> Had the common people but known that the Christians and the Byzantines [known by the Arabs simply as the "Romans"] have neither wisdom nor clarity [of mind] nor depth of thought but are simply clever with their hands . . . they would have removed them from the ranks of the literati and dropped

[49] Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad, eds., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1992), 122.

[50] Al-Gahiz, *Kibab al-ahbar, The Classical Heritage in Islam,* Franz Rosenthal, trans. (London and Berkeley: Routledge & Kegan Paul and the University of California Press, 1975), 44-45.

> them from the roster of philosophers and sages because works like the *Organon, On Coming to Be and Passing Away,* and *Meteorology* were written by Aristotle, and he is neither Byzantine nor Christian; the *Almagest* was written by Ptolemy, and he is neither Byzantine nor Christian; the *Elements* was written by Euclid, and he is neither Byzantine nor Christian; medical books were written by Galen, who was neither Byzantine nor Christian; and similarly with the books by Democritus, Hippocrates, Plato, and on and on. All these are individuals of one nation; they have perished but the traces of their minds live on: they are the Greeks. Their religion was different from the religion of the Byzantines, and their culture was different from the culture of the Byzantines. They were scientists, while these people [the Byzantines] are artisans who appropriated the books of the Greeks on account of geographical proximity. Some of those books they ascribed to themselves while others they converted to their religion, except for those Greek books that were too famous and the philosophical works were too well known; unable, then, to change the names [of the authors] of these books, they claimed that the Greeks were but one of the Byzantine tribes. They used their religious beliefs to boast superiority over the Jews, to display their arrogance toward the Arabs, and to wax haughty over the Indians to the point that they actually claimed that our sages are followers of theirs, and that our philosophers have followed their example. And that is that.[51]

Al-Masudi, an Arabic historian of the tenth century, continues this anti-Byzantine line of reasoning, clearly indicating that the classical Greek inheritance did not flow through Constantinople. Note not only his content but his tone as well.

> During the time of the ancient Greeks, and for a little while during the Byzantine [i.e., in this case, Roman] empire, the philosophical sciences kept on growing and developing, and scholars and philosophers were respected and honored. They developed their theories on natural science—on the body, the intellect, the soul—and on the quadrivium . . . The sciences continued to be in great demand and intensely cultivated until the religion of Christianity appeared among the Byzantines; they then effaced the signs of philosophy, eliminated its traces, destroyed its paths, and they changed and corrupted what the ancient Greeks had set forth in clear expositions.[52]

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[51] Cited by Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 87 from Al-Gahiz, "ar-Radd ala n-Nasara," in *Rasa il al-Gahiz*, ed. A.M. Harun, vol. 3 (Cairo: al-Hangi, 1979), 314-315.

[52] Cited by Gutas, Ibid., 89 from al-Masudi, *Murug ad-dahab,* ed. C. Pellat (Beirut: Universite Libanaise, 1965-79), sec. 741.

Ibn-Ridwan (d. 11th century) adds, "But for that [Islam's appreciation for Greek ideas], all the sciences of the ancients, including medicine, logic, and philosophy, would have been forgotten, <just as they have been forgotten> today in the lands in which they were most specifically cultivated; I mean Rome, Athens, the Byzantine provinces, and in many other lands."[53] The implications are clear; Islam is superior to Christianity because it has recognized rather than rejected the wisdom of the ancient Greeks.[54]

Gutas goes on to state that an appreciation for the level of work done during the translation movement in Baghdad can hardly be overestimated, even though it is little discussed in Western histories of philosophy. Listen to his petition, among the strongest statements in this dissertation:

> The Graeco-Arabic translation movement of Baghdad constitutes a truly epoch-making stage, by any standard, in the course of human history. It is equal in significance to, and belongs to the same narrative as, I would claim, that of Pericles' Athens, the Italian Renaissance, or the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and it deserves so to be recognized and embedded in our historical consciousness.[55]

Over time, the Syriac to Arabic translations became better in quality and quantity as translators became more familiar with the Arabic language and as the demand for translations increased among Arabic-speaking leaders and scholars. Some

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[53] Cited by Gutas, Ibid., 93 from Ibn-Ridwan, *Al-Kitab an-nafi fi kayfiyyat talim sinaat at-tibb,* ed. K. as-Samarrai (Baghdad: Matbaat Gamiat Baghdad, 1986), 107-108.

[54] The Abbasid dynasty continued to support the translation movement into later generations of leaders. There is a famous report of a dream by the seventh Abbasid caliph, al-Mamun (786-833) wherein he is reported to have conversed with Aristotle himself, perhaps a device used to support the importance of the Greek-Arabic translation work.

[55] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, 8.

of the translators began producing commentaries and paraphrases in addition to the basic translations, showing an evolution in philosophical debate. A further gift that these Syrian translators gave to the Muslim Empire was an Arabic vocabulary for philosophical concepts. Because many Muslim scholars were prejudiced against the languages of "unbelievers," none of the later Arabic philosophers were well trained in Greek, and thus had to rely on the work of the translators before them.[56] Richard Walzer makes this important observation: "Translators are not very conspicuous figures in the history of philosophy, but without their painstaking work, the essential links in the continuity of Western thought would never have been forged, nor would Arabic philosophy in particular ever have come into existence."[57]

5.4 Philosophical Genres used in Islam Culture

Up to this point, we have talked about how translations of Greek ideas were beginning to be diffused within the Islamic culture at large. Before moving into a discussion of the formation of a professional, philosophical Arabic-speaking elite, and the consequences of these Arabic philosophers on the West, a brief side-trail must be mentioned to illuminate the broad genres in which philosophy found its way into the intellectual life of Islam.[58]

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[56] Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 9. See also Rescher, *The Development of Arabic Logic,* 32, on the strong quality of these translations.

[57] Richard Walzer, *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 7.

[58] Charles Burnett, "Arabic into Latin: The Reception of Arabic Philosophy into Western Europe," *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 370-371.

The use of Greek philosophy can be said to be bordered by two extremes. On the one end of the scale is the philosophical *auctoritas* or "name-dropping," a kind of pseudo-intellectualism where Greek philosophers are mentioned to support a wide variety of personal positions, using the authority of Plato or Aristotle in a loose, sometimes even inappropriate way. On the other end of the spectrum is the close word-by-word, textually correct and critical investigation of the Greek philosophers. Between these two extremes is a wide range of influence that a thinker might exert on a culture, and the resultant diverse ways in which that influence might be manifested within the intellectual environment. Not all of the following philosophical devices were novel to Islam; in fact, most had a history that went back to early Hellenistic times.[59] Here we will simply note that within Islamic culture, Greek philosophy was placed into many of these forms to further opportunities to discuss, explain, and teach philosophy, showing to what extent Greek ideas were permeating this culture in general.

Foundationally, the Arabic philosophical movement made great use of the *eisagoge*[60] device, a kind of introductory, pedagogic tool to help a novice get oriented within a particular philosopher's corpus. This device was well known in earlier Hellenistic times, but the Arabic scholastics made this a key part of their curriculum,

[59] This discussion expands the work done in Chapter 3, where I examined the variety of ways in which philosophical "commentaries" were written. The information in this section is based on the work of Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs,* 79-134.

[60] Eisagoge (εἰσαγωγή) literally means, in Greek, "introduction."

offering a kind of systematization to philosophical inquiry that would later move to the West.

Typical of the more common commentary movement philosophy circles, Arabic commentaries are more literary in style, rather than in the style of a classroom lecture, done paragraph by paragraph with instructor notes added by notes taken by students. Since philosophy in Islam culture did not particularly penetrate the school curriculum, commentaries were produced by individuals in more private settings.

With the maturing of the Baghdad school, the exegetical/gloss commentaries became popular, where we get a better feel of the commentator's own ideas in interaction with the original philosopher. These exegetical commentaries could come in different "sizes" depending on the intended audience: small, middle, or large. The smaller gloss commentaries included marginal notations, usually philological in nature, and sometimes a culminate work of several succeeding scholars. The Arabic *tafsir* (sometimes called "Great Commentary) was especially notable in the work of Averroes on Aristotle.

Some of the manuscripts used in the Arabic philosophical tradition include what is called an "epitome," referring to the practice of some later authors who wrote distilled versions of larger works. Some writers attempted to convey the stance and spirit of the original, while others added further details or anecdotes regarding the general subject. This device is sometimes simply called a paraphrase. As with all secondary sources, a different bias not present in the original could creep in.

Another philosophical genre is described as a "Book of Definitions" which, as the name implies, was a listing of key philosophical and technical terms with concise explanations of these concepts. An example in the Syrian is the *Book of Definitions on all the Subjects of Logic* by the Nestorian Ahoudemmah (d. 575), followed by Arabic works like al-Kindi's *On the Definitions and Descriptions of Things* and al-Israili's *Book of Definitions*, and including works in the same genre into the thirteenth century.

The philosophical encyclopedia was an attempt to condense collected knowledge in a particular area of study as well as to organize materials into consistent and related topics. In this way, an Arabic scholar could show how Plato's or Aristotle's works, according to their interpretation, was best categorized. Here we see how the Greek authors were systematized and their thought woven into the fabric of the then-current philosophical discussion. Some of these encyclopedias could be quite heterogeneous and cover a variety of subjects well outside the normal boundaries of philosophy proper.

A doxographical collection is a gathering of quotes or ideas from a variety of writers, in this case philosophers, on any give subject. These sayings are multiplied by an editor in order to prove a point or to make an assertion. A doxography is, in effect, a series of excerpts, sometimes taken out of their original context, and used by the editor to examine a particular tenet of belief or fact.[61] Related to the genre of

[61] See the excellent discussion and bibliography on this specialized topic by Jaap Mansfeld, "Doxography of Ancient Philosophy," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, < http://plato. stanford.edu/entries/ doxography-ancient/>, accessed August 19, 2007.

doxography is the Arabic literature category of gnomonology, which are collections of short sayings from the philosophers, usually on ethical topics; much like a book of proverbs.

The influence of Greek philosophy in Islam was not restricted to strictly literary works; it supplied a great deal of influence in the general culture of Islam, what is called *adab* in Arabic. This word refers to the sum of virtues that are prized by a society. Greek thought infiltrated the general structure of Islam, especially in helping understand the rational world. While Islamic theology would place barriers on the extent to which Greek philosophy would be allowed to enter into dialogue with it, the shaping of a broad world-view with regard to the natural world made its way into the non-technical handbooks of Arabic life.

The whole point of this excursion into various philosophical devices within the Islamic world is to emphasize that the connection of Greek philosophy, from Byzantium to Western Europe via Islam, was much more than a mere handing on of manuscripts. The Greek philosophical tradition was integrated into Arabic intellectual discussion at many levels and arrived in Spain to be translated into Latin having been processed by the Arabic mind.[62] This reminds us of an important part of this historical analysis, which has been repeated in previous chapters—the Western philosophical tradition cannot simplistically be reduced to a foundation built on Plato and Aristotle alone; there is a series of filters that lay between Western thought and the original Greek philosophers that informs and shapes the way in which that ancient tradition

[62] Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Philosophers in the Arabic Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

was passed on to us. While we can read the Greek philosophers for ourselves, assuming our current versions of their manuscripts are somewhat trustworthy (an interesting question in itself), we cannot ignore the way in which these ideas were packaged and distilled as they came into the hands of pre-Renaissance Europe, with the commentary of centuries of scholars attached to them. This dissertation is a reminder that many of those commentators were attached to the Islamic Empire and Arabic tradition. As we have seen, "both as textual technicians and as commentators the Arabs were capable of advanced work."[63]

5.5 Arabic-Speaking Philosophers in the Islamic Empire

In the Abbasid period, as people of Hellenized areas were incorporated into the Islamic Empire, and as Greek philosophy became more available, the movement called *mutikallimum* theology emerged. Derived from the term *kalam* (reasoned argument), this discipline applied philosophy to Islam for two purposes: apologetics and dogmatics.[64] Islam theologians would use various philosophical elements to bolster their arguments and to show the strength of their positions. No methodical use of Greek philosophy was maintained, rather "we see a key operative principle of

[63] Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs,* 135.

[64] See Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

kalam, its eclectic use of individual philosophical ideas at points where they were useful, rather than systematic reformulation of theology in philosophical terms."[65]

The first true Arabic philosophers began to appear around 850. This is what might be called the classical[66] or formative period of philosophy in the Arabic language. This period "goes from the ninth to the twelfth centuries C.E. During this period, authors working in Arabic received and reinterpreted the philosophical inheritance of the Greeks, especially Aristotle.[67] The process culminated at the end of the classical period with the massive body of commentaries on Aristotle by Averroes."[68] I will briefly examine several of these key figures, who provide significant links in the Greek philosophical chain on continuity.[69] Interestingly, most of these men were both scientists[70] as well as philosophers, especially interested in

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[65] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 138. For more information see Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[66] As opposed to the post-classical period, which turned more toward fundamentalism and mysticism. "The post-classical era presents us with a forbidding corpus of philosophical work, much of it unedited and unstudied by Western scholars," Adamson and Taylor, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* 6.

[67] "Apparently the Platonic dialogues were translated into Arabic at the same time as the Aristotelian corpus . . . [While Aristotle dominated the thought of Islamic philosophers] they did, however, recognize Platonism as an entity, and some of the Platonic theses had an important and interesting career among the *falasifah*," Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs,* 65. For a general orientation on Islamic Platonism see Klibansky, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition During the Middle Ages*.

[68] Adamson and Taylor, "Introduction, *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 1.

[69] For access to some of these original writings of these Arabic philosophers, refer to Muhammad Ali Khalidi, ed., *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For a standard work on the linkage of Islam to Greek ideas see S.M. Stern, H. Hourani, and V. Brown, eds., *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[70] The contributions of the Islamic Empire go well beyond philosophy—giant strides in all branches of science were made by Arabic speaking scholars including mathematics (we use Arabic [or Hindu]

medical science. The West today often recognizes some of these names in connection with medical advances rather than philosophy, showing both that they were, in reality, accomplished medical thinkers as well as a Western bias against and/or ignorance of the connection of Arabic philosophy to Western thought.[71]

As much as Arab aristocracy desired access to Greek learning, the primary organized and institutional education in philosophy was in schools run by Christian scholars. As Islamic theologians gradually began to dominate Christian influence, and Islamic law schools (madhabs or madrasas) and Islamic colleges (masjid) proliferated, the study of "foreign" sciences such as philosophy waned, and these Christian schools died out.[72] "The structure of schooling in Muslim lands first advanced and then took its toll on speculative thought."[73] As Laughlin concludes, "Individuals who were dedicated to studying ancient Greek philosophy and logic had to resort to isolated, individual teachers. It is no surprise, therefore, to learn that the study of [Greek philosophy] slowly died in the following centuries [within Arabic circles]."[74] Most of the Arabic-speaking individuals who continued in the Greek

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numbers not Latin today and algebra is an Arabic word itself), astronomy, chemistry, optics, engineering, and biology/medicine.

[71] See Therese-Anne Druart, "Philosophy in Islam," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, ed. McGrade, 97-120.

[72] Approximate dates of viable activity: School of Jundishapur (575-800), Translation School of Hunain ibn Ishaq (820-950), School of Baghdad or "House of Wisdom" (940-1050). For an exhaustive study of the transference of humanism, and the related topic of the interplay between faith and reason in Islam and, later, Christianity, see the foundational study by George Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990).

[73] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 131.

[74] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure*, 110.

philosophical tradition did so either through independent teachers or through their own personal diligent efforts. While the demise of the study of Greek philosophy within the Islamic Empire as a whole is regrettable, it does not devalue the contribution of Arabic scholars to the story of the historical continuity of classical Greek thinking. It does point out how cultures change and evolve and, for our purposes, how each civilization in this study is dependent not only on its predecessors, but interestingly, also on it successors to carry on the work established during its period of creative intellectual activity.

First, before we engage in our biographical review of key Arabic scholars, we need to limit and define what we mean by "Arabic" philosophy. Generally, the term "Islamic philosophy" is not used in the relevant literature because of several important reasons. First, what we encounter in these Arabic works is largely Greek philosophy rendered into the Arabic language.[75] That does not mean that there is no creative work involved in this stage. In fact, as I pointed out in chapter 1, "translation is always interpretation and . . . philosophers can be at their most creative when they take up the task of understanding their predecessors."[76] Second, many of those involved were in fact Christians or Jews and not Muslims (and in most cases not

[75] Arabic is often described as an unusually beautiful language. "God gave three great things to the world," says the Arab proverb. "The brain of the Frank, the hands of the Chinese, and the tongue of the Arab." "The treasure of Arabic words is exceedingly rich, and it can be increased almost indefinitely, because a very complex and elegant morphology makes its easy to create new derivatives of the old stems according to one's needs," Sarton, *The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East*, 19-20. However, translating Greek ideas, often through Syriac, did present an understandably difficult task which resulted in Arabic influenced translations of the Greek works, which both added and deleted details from the original Greek. Arabic may have been a beautiful language but never as precise as Greek or as flexible perhaps as Syriac. See Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs,* 66.

[76] Peter Adamson, "Al-Kindi and the Reception of Greek Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 48-49.

strictly "Arab" either). Third, many of the Arabic philosophers who were Muslims, while not necessarily antagonistic toward Islamic theology, intentionally tried to separate theology and philosophy. But equally important to remember is the linkage of this philosophical work, done in the Arabic language, with the Islamic Empire. The above definitions might suggest that Islam was irrelevant to the transmission of Greek ideas; that it was simply a matter of language that happened to be Arabic. What the Islamic Empire accomplished was to create a society in which philosophy could flourish, at least within limited portions of that society, a general climate of stability where philosophical debates could find resources, and a communication vehicle from which to exchange ideas across vast geographical territories. As well, due to the strong influence on Arabic-speaking philosophers by Islamic theologians, the philosophy-theology debate was never far from hand and did influence in direct ways the commentaries of the Arabic philosophers, as I will show below. In turn, when their translated works came into Latin, the Islamic presence is still felt in the background of their contributions to Western thought just as much as Christian theology is found in the commentaries on Greek thought by Byzantine writers.

5.51 Al-Kindi

Yaqub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi of Basra (805-873; Latin: Alcindi), sometimes called the first true Arabic philosopher,[77] worked to reconcile and integrate

[77] Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, in the title of ch. 3, sec. 1, describes al-Kindi as "The First Creative Philosophical Writer in Islam." For further basic information on al-Kindi see George N. Atiyeh, *Al-Kindi: the Philosopher of the Arabs* (Rawalpindi, India: Kazi Publications Inc., 1966).

Platonism, neo-Platonism and Aristotelianism with Islam, with emphasis on the latter. This was the next step in the development of Arabic philosophy, following *kalam,* known as *falsafah*,[78] or philosophy studied apart from theology.[79] Al-Kindi is generally regarded as the initiator of *falsafah.* He objected to the piecemeal way that philosophy was used under *kalam,* and incorporated a more systematic usage of Plato and Aristotle. "He developed an overarching vision of the unity and interrelatedness of all knowledge and its research along verifiable and rational lines."[80]According to al-Kindi,

> We ought not to be ashamed of appreciating the truth and of acquiring it wherever it comes from, even if it comes from races distant and nations different from us. For the seeker of truth nothing takes precedence over the truth, and there is no disparagement of the truth, nor belittling either of him who speaks it or of him who conveys it. [The status of] no one is diminished by the truth; rather does the truth ennoble all.[81]

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[78] A calque or loan translation from the Greek *philosophia*.

[79] Here is a practical definition of *falsafah:* "Some of the [Arabic] philosophers skated far closer to the edge of rationalism than most Christians were willing to do [for example, in Byzantium] until the time of the Renaissance, though surely not over the edge into disbelief," Peters, "Hellenism in Islam," *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 89.

[80] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arab Culture,* 134.

[81] From al-Kindi's *fi l-falsafa al-ula,* in *Rasa il al-Kind al-flsafiya* (*Al-Kindi's Metaphysics*), ed. M.A. Abu-Rida, trans. A.L. Ivry (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), 58. A similar idea is put forward by al-Kindi's contemporary, Ibn-Qutayba: "For the way to Allah is not one nor is all that is good confined to night prayers, continuous fasting, and the knowledge of the lawful and forbidden. On the contrary, the ways to Him are many and the doors of the good are wide . . . Knowledge is the stray camel of the believer; it benefits him regardless from where he takes it: it shall not disparage truth should you hear it from polytheists, nor advice should it be derived from those who harbor hatred; shabby clothes do no injustice to a beautiful woman, nor shells to their pearls, nor its origin from dust to pure gold. Whoever disregards taking the good from its place misses an opportunity, and opportunities are as transient as the clouds . . . Ibn-Abbas [the Prophet's uncle] said: 'Take wisdom from whomever you hear it, for the non-wise may utter a wise saying and a bull's eye may be hit by a non-sharpshooter,'" quoted by Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 159, citing ibn-Qutayba, *Uyun al-ahvar,* vol. 1 (Cairo: 1923-30), 10.11-15 and 15.11-17.

The *falsafah* movement generated great attention in the Arabic world for one important reason—it was new. Compared to the centuries-old battle between reason and faith in the years prior to the time of Byzantium and into its early history, the influx of Greek ideas was new to Islamic thinkers and this newness created controversy, debate and dialogue; in other words it created vitality. The Byzantine thinkers of later centuries had had the arguments of Greek thought discussed to the point of exhaustion by the Church Fathers. The newness was gone and rigidity had set in. In Islam, the debate was fresh and full of life. "Both the novelty and the vigor of this unparalleled assault on the intellectual life of Islam attracted some of its great talents."[82]

With support from patrons, al-Kindi spent most of his career in Baghdad, gathering a wide circle of individuals capable of dialogue on philosophy.[83] He was in many ways bound by theological issues, like many of his former Christian counterparts, as he attempted to combine faith and reason.[84] "His main contribution . . . was introducing philosophy to a culture which superstition had dominated before Muhammad and a crude theology had dominated after Muhammad."[85] Al-Kindi's own objective is seen here: "My principle is first to record in complete quotations all that the Ancients have said on the subject; secondly, to complete what the Ancients

[82] Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs,* 27.

[83] Gerhard Endress, "The Circle of al-Kindi," in *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism,* ed. Gerhard Endress and Remke Kruk (Leiden: Research School, CNWS, 1997).

[84] See the interesting essay by Therese-Anne Druart, "Philosophical Consolation in Christianity and Islam: Boethius and al-Kindi," *Topoi* 19/1 (2000): 25-34.

[85] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 114.

have not fully expressed, and this according to the usage of our Arabic language."[86] Al-Kindi repeats his purpose in several of his introductions, namely not to merely repeat what the ancients have said but to expand their ideas.[87] Al-Kindi's extensive work "stands at the midway point between the earlier translators and the later Arabic logicians and philosophers."[88] Even though al-Kindi did not start with the intent of creating a new dialogue on Greek philosophy, he did, and the future of Arabic philosophy is indebted to his adventurous work. "He meant to be unoriginal, and in this respect, he failed."[89]

5.52 The Peripatetics of Baghdad

The school of philosophy in Alexandria did not die out when the Muslims conquered North Africa. Continued scholarship is seen in this city on a continuous basis. But there was a kind of transfer of prestige from Alexandria to Baghdad about the year 900. Al-Quwayri, Yuhanna ibn Haylan, and Abu Yahya al-Marwazi came to Baghdad from Alexandria and began lecturing on philosophy. Al-Farabi (see below) was a first generation student of this group of teachers.

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[86] Quoted by Walzer, *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, 13.

[87] S. Fazzo and H. Wiesner, "Alexander of Aphrodisias in the Kindi Circle and in al-Kindi's Cosmology," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 3 (1993): 119-153.

[88] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 114, referring to Rescher, *The Development of Arabic Logic*, 103.

[89] Peter Adamson, "Al-Kindi and the Reception of Greek Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 49.

5.53 Al-Rhazi

Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Rhazi of Persia (865-925; Latin: Rhazes) spent most of his life in Rayy, near Teheran.[90] According to Walzer, "In the history of Arabic philosophy, al-Rhazi was the most original philosopher, and the only prominent scholar to challenge fundamental Islamic beliefs."[91] This seems like an overstatement, when Ibn Sina and Ibn Rusdh are considered, but Walzer is correct in showing al-Rhazi's significance for his particular time. He was a pioneer in many ways. He taught that the road to salvation was found through philosophy. Though accused of being an infidel and schismatic, many of his ideas influenced future scholars, though none of his philosophical works survived.

5.54 Al-Farabi

For Arabic readers, al-Kindi had emphasized elements of Aristotle's works. Al-Rhazi had added a Platonic dimension. Al Farabi (870-950; Latin: Abunaser) concentrated his work on neo-Platonism, which still worked with the foundations of

[90] Noting this rather far-eastern location of an Arabic-Greek scholar encourages a comment about the culture of Iran prior to Islamic control and its important place in this story. "The lines between Baghdad and Constantinople were not closed between A.D. 800-1050, the apogee of Aristotelianism in Islam. There are references to scholarly expeditions into Byzantine territory in search of manuscripts, to embassies back and forth between the capitals. But the record is, for all that, a disappointing one. The procession of Hellenizing scholars and apprentices came to Baghdad from quite another direction, from the towns in the Iranian highlands and the border of the eastern steppe . . . Clearly the flowering of Greek studies in Islam was something more complex than the mere encounter of the Arabs . . . with the Byzantine guardians of the Hellenistic legacy. Nor is the question 'How did Greek learning pass into Islam?' to be answered simply by 'Through the Nestorians.' On all sides there is evidence of an Iranian cultural synthesis which was, in the final analysis, to provide the soil from which the 'Greek sciences' [including philosophy] were to bloom," Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs,* 42.

[91] Walzer, *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy,* 18.

both Plato and Aristotle.[92] Al-Farabi moved the *falsafah* tradition further down the road of Arabic thinking. One title from his many works shows his desire for synthesis among the Greek philosophers, as the neo-Platonists were trained to do: "On the Agreement of the Opinions of the Philosophers Plato and Aristotle."[93] His neo-Platonist and neo-Aristotelian synthesis is clearly seen in this quote:

> Man is a part of the world, and if we wish to understand his aim and activity and use and place, then we must first know the purpose of the whole world, so that it will become clear to us what man's aim is, as well as the fact that man is necessarily a part of the world, in that his aim is necessary for realizing the ultimate purpose of the whole world. Therefore, if we wish to know the object toward which we should strive, we must know the aim of man and the human perfection on account of which we should strive.[94]

Al-Farabi's contemporaries gave him the title, "The Second Teacher" (Aristotle is consistently known as The First Teacher) because of his knowledge of Aristotle's logic.[95] Starting his studies in Damascus, he moved to Baghdad and studied under a Syriac-Christian teacher. He soon became the foremost logician in the

[92] "It is impossible to draw a firm line between the impact of Aristotelianism and the impact of Neoplatonism on Arabic philosophy," Adamson and Taylor, "Introduction, in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* 4. The following neo-Platonic writers were available to Arabic scholars during its classical period: Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Themistius, Syrianus, Proclus, pseudo-Dionysius the Aeropagite, Simplicius, Philoponus, and Olympiodorus. For further comment on this topic see Parviz Morewedge, ed., *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) and Franz Rosenthal, "On the Knowledge of Plato's Philosophy in the Islamic World," in *Greek Philosophy in the Arab World* (Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing Company, 1990).

[93] As stated by Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity*, 172, although the exact title is disputed.

[94] Quoted by David C. Reisman, "Al-Farabi and the philosophical curriculum," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 68-69.

[95] See, for example, F.W. Zimmermann, *Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De Interpretatione* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) as well as Shukri Abed, *Aristotelian Logic and the Arabic Language in Alfarabi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

Islamic world.[96] Unlike al-Kindi and al-Rhazi, al-Farabi was well known and appreciated in his own time. As with all philosophers who are also driven by theological concerns, the relation between faith and reason is critical. Al-Farabi wanted to uplift the status of philosophy within Islam; he did not want to abandon theology but wanted it restricted to the realm of non-philosophers.[97] Al-Farabi, however, did not shy away from an obvious conclusion: religious communities were all conditioned by the historical circumstances into which and from which they were born. "Philosophy is perennial; religions are of this time and this place."[98]

The influence of al-Farabi on later Western medieval writers was significant. The work of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquanas, thirteenth century theologians, show considerable acquaintance with his work, as we will explore further in the next chapter.

5.55 Ibn Sina (Avicenna) [99]

Abu Ali al-Husain ibn Sina (980-1037; Latin: Avicenna)[100] was both an organizer of other philosophers' work and also an original philosopher himself, likely

[96] Harry Elmer Barnes, *An Intellectual and Cultural History of the Western World,* 3rd ed., vol. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1965), 402.

[97] Walzer, *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy,* 18, 20.

[98] Peters, "Hellenism in Islam," *Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 89.

[99] Jules Janssens has provided an exhaustive list of recent works written about Avicenna in his *An Annotated Bibliography on Ibn Sîna* (1970-1989) (Leuven, Belgium: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven 1991); First Supplement (1990-1994) (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven 1999).

[100] I will consistently refer to Ibn Sina as Avicenna, his traditional Latinized and more familiar Western name.

influenced by the so-called Ismaili sect of theologians/philosophers of the tenth century. Avicenna lived in the far northeastern corner of the Islamic Empire, raised in what is now Uzbekistan and later moving near the modern city of Tehran, Iran. Avicenna reports that he had read "the works of the ancients," including both translations of original works as well as commentaries, while yet a teenager, particularly the works of Aristotle: *Metaphysics* and *De Interpretatione*. "When I reached my eighteenth year I was done with all these sciences. And while at that time I had a better memory for [such] knowledge, I am more mature today; otherwise the knowledge [itself] is one and the same thing, nothing new having come to me afterward [i.e., after the age of eighteen].[101]

Colish calls him "easily the most original philosopher in early medieval Islam,"[102] in distinction to Walzer's description of Ibn Rhazi above. "The formative period [of Arabic philosophy] involves more than just the commentaries of the Greek philosophical tradition. Most important for the later Islamic tradition was the towering achievement of Avicenna . . . Indeed, one way of viewing Arabic philosophy is as the tradition that leads up to and stems from the work of Avicenna."[103] Avicenna is credited with writing ninety-nine books on philosophy and science. Robert Wisnovsky describes him as,

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[101] Quoted by Robert Wisnovsky, "Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 96.

[102] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 141.

[103] Adamson and Taylor, "Introduction, in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 2, 5.

> . . . the central figure in the history of Arabic-Islamic philosophy. Before Avicenna, *falsafa* (Arabic Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophy) and *kalam* (Islamic doctrinal theology) were distinct strands of thought . . . After Avicenna, by contrast, the two strands fused together and post-Avicennian *kalam* emerged as a truly Islamic philosophy, a synthesis of Avicenna's metaphysics and Muslim doctrine.[104]

Colish notes that "whether he sought to unite philosophy and theology or practiced pure *falsafah* with a compartmentalized mind has inspired debate since his own day, for there are positions he takes that support both interpretations of his work."[105] Avicenna was primarily a metaphysician, feeling that the mind is fundamental, which places his Platonic preferences before his sense-based epistemology derived from Aristotle.[106] In fact, his form of idealism has been compared to Descartes' own "I think therefore I am" argumentation.[107] D'Ancona describes the relationship between Plato and Aristotle in the *falsafah* tradition by the time of Avicenna and shows how these two masters' ideas are often difficult to separate in the mind of the Middle Ages, whether that mind be Islamic or Christian:

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[104] Wisnovsky, "Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 92.

[105] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 141.

[106] Aristotle was no stranger to Avicenna, however. See, for example, Avicenna's *Eastern Philosophy*, an exposition that distills his major areas of disagreement with Aristotle, a work that could have been titled, "Doubts about Aristotle." Refer to Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotlelian Tradition* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988).

[107] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 142. Avicenna's philosophical tenets have become of great interest to critical Western scholarship and to those engaged in the field of Arabic philosophy. However, it is still the case that the West only pays attention to a portion of his philosophy known as the "Latin Avicennian School." Avicenna's philosophical contributions have been overshadowed by Orientalist scholarship, which has often sought to define him as a mystic rather than an Aristotelian philosopher, a source of irritation to contemporary Arabic scholars. On his connection to Descartes, see Therese-Anne Druart, "The Soul and Body Problem: Avicenna and Descartes," in *Arabic Philosophy and the West: Continuity and Interaction*, ed. Therese-Anne Druart (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 1988), 27-49.

> The project of crowning Aristotle's metaphysics with a rational theology based on the Platonic tradition is an application of the last Neoplatonic model of philosophy as a systematic discipline, covering topics from logic to theology. We do not know whether this pattern reached the circle of al-Kindi as such or whether it was in a sense recreated. What we can say is that the attribution of a Neoplatonic rational theology to Aristotle has its origins in post-Plotinian Platonism, and in the primacy that the Alexandrian commentators gave to Aristotle without renouncing the main Neoplatonic tenets regarding the One, Intellect, and Soul. For this reason, *falsafa* cannot be properly understood if its roots in the philosophical thought of Late Antiquity are not taken into account.[108]

Later Arabic philosophers would often feel a need to respond to Avicenna, either positively or negatively, due to his sheer weight among scholars. "Like Kant in the German tradition or Plato and Aristotle in the Greek tradition, Avicenna significantly influenced everything that came after him in the Arabic tradition."[109] He was a very popular writer and more than any other scholar, helped spread the ideas of neo-Platonism within the Islamic world. Avicenna was "in the Arabic culture the most effective promoter of Greek philosophy."[110] Avicenna's impact was felt not only in the Arabic world but in Christian Europe as well, overshadowed only by Averroes.

5.56 Al-Ghazali

During this time of Arabic reflection on Greek philosophy, Islamic theologians, much like the case in Byzantium, were fearful of its influence and

[108] D'Ancona, "Greek into Arabic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 26.

[109] Adamson and Taylor, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 5-6.

[110] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 117.

gradually their attacks on this kind of education and thinking become dominant. During this period of philosophical alienation, al-Ghazali of Khurasan (1058-1111; Latin: Algazel) was studying the work of Plato and Aristotle. Al-Ghazali pursued a personal course of investigation into the value of philosophy; his conclusion moved him to embrace mysticism.[111] Convinced that philosophy was in error, he plotted an intellectual attack on the philosophers of his day, whom he considered to be sources of irreligion and heresy. To present his arguments in the best light possible, he consciously studied the philosophy he had come to reject. Out of his research he wrote a book titled, "The Goals of the Philosophers," in which he outlined the philosophical agenda of the Greeks and of those who followed in their tradition. Then he wrote a second book, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers,* in which he systematically dismantled and refuted the arguments of his first book.[112] Al-Ghazali's attacks on the premises and tools of philosophy weakened support for this field in the eastern portions of the Islamic Empire. For this group of Muslims, submission to God, not submission to philosophy, was the path to Truth in the world. But the Muslim world was not confined to the reaches of Baghdad. The story of how Greek philosophy continued in Arabic-speaking lands now shifts focus to the extreme opposite end of the Empire, to Sicily and Spain.

[111] His journey into intellectual doubt is reminiscent of Descartes' similar journey centuries later. Some have suggested Descartes owed al-Ghazali at least a footnote in his *Discourse on Method.*

[112] Al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers,* trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000).

There is some debate about what al-Ghazali's ultimate purposes and attitudes toward philosophy were.[113] Colish maintains that al-Ghazali was not anti-philosophical (perhaps anti-Platonic, more attuned to Aristotle), but that he simply wanted philosophers to use their tools more precisely. While he himself was a critic of the philosophers, al-Ghazili was a master in the art of philosophy and had an immense education in the field. "In principle, al-Ghazzali holds out the possibility of integrating the intellectual and the experiential in religion, of synthesizing reason and authority."[114] However, most theologians saw in al-Ghazali's work a call to retreat from *falsafah* and to go only as far as *kalam*. While it is not widely agreed that al-Ghazali himself intended to "shut the door" on Arabic philosophical inquiry completely and permanently, such an interpretation of al-Ghazali's work led Islamic society to be "frozen in time," first in the East and eventually in the West. Works of critics of al-Ghazali, as well as the works of any ancient philosopher, were practically forbidden after this time. Notably, al-Ghazali's works spurred on the work of the few brave Islamic philosophers who came after him.[115]

[113] See for example, Michael E. Marmura's discussion, "Al-Ghazali," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 137-154, as well as Meyers strong discussion in *Arabic Thought and the Western World,* 35-45.

[114] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 145.

[115] Miklos Maroth, ed., *Problems in Arabic Philosophy* (Piliscsaba, Hungary: Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, 2003).

5.57 Islamic Philosophers in Andalusia

By 700, Arab armies had swept across North Africa and from there they began to access the southern approaches to Europe, in Sicily and southern Italy and especially in Spain. Arab-Islamic invaders had little trouble conquering Spain (al-Andalus in Arabic or Andalusia) and held this portion of Europe, or parts of it, until the 13th century; the last Arabic ruler in Spanish territory was not subjugated until 1492.[116] The capitol city of al-Andalus, which in many ways considered itself separate from the Empire centered in Baghdad, was Cordoba. Between the years 900-1000, al-Andalus became the most heavily populated area of Europe. Schools and libraries flourished. Arabic philosophers, trained in the East, migrated to the West where, at least in certain areas and certain time periods, there was more openness to philosophical inquiry than in the theologically-bound eastern Islamic Empire. Multiculturalism was deeply rooted in this region; the languages of Arabic, Latin, and Hebrew mixed and flowed together as did the respective cultures represented by these languages.[117]

> For many decades the intellectual and cultural climate of "al-Andalus" was . . . subsidiary to that of the East [Islam Empire]. Philosophy was no exception: it came first from the East, but in time acquired an autonomous life. This is reflected in the history of Andalusian philosophy, which at first

[116] The Ummayad caliphate began to disintegrate into smaller units known as *taifas.* The Almoravids (1091-1145) and Almohads (1145-1223), both from North Africa (also known as Berbers or Moors), took control of Spain and created a more fundamentalist environment before the final Latin recapture of the peninsula. Refer to O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain,* 89-190, as well as two ancient accounts of the Muslim Conquest, the anonymous "Chronicle of 754," translated from Latin by Kenneth B. Wolf and Ibn Abd al-Hakam's "Narrative of the Conquest of al-Andalus," translated from Arabic by David A. Cohen, both in Constable, *Medieval Iberia: Readings,* 29-35.

[117] Arthur Hyman and James Jerome Walsh, eds., *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Traditions* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1983).

followed in the footsteps of al-Farabi and Avicenna, but soon developed along two very different paths.[118]

One of these paths would lead to the work of the Sufis and mysticism, for example in the work of Ibn Bajja (d. 1070; Latin: Avempace) and Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185). However, our study will concentrate on the second of these paths, found in the work of Averroes and, to a lesser degree, Maimonides.

5.58 Ibn Rushd (Averroes)[119]

Abu l-Walid Muhammad ibn Amad ibn Rushd of Cordoba (1126-1198; Latin: Averroes)[120] was the most systematic presenter of Aristotle's philosophy in Arabic culture. "Averroes represents the high tide of rationalism in medieval Islam. He is a proponent of *falsafah* in its purest form."[121] Averroes was convinced that philosophy, notably Aristotle's logic, derived through reason, could offer the best answer to understanding the world.[122] Two of Averroes' predecessors, al-Farabi and Avicenna, had tried to push the philosophical agenda in the East, but were met with such opposition by Islamic theologians that their work was blunted. Averroes desired to

[118] Josef Puig Montada, "Philosophy in Andalusia: Ibn Bajja and Ibn Tufayl," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 155.

[119] See the extensive bibliographic information catalogued by the Thomas-Institut, Köln at <http://www.thomasinst.uni-koeln.de/averroes/bibliography.htm#bib>.

[120] I will consistently refer to Ibn Rushd as Averroes, his traditional Latinized and more familiar Western name.

[121] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 145.

[122] Reminiscent of the Arabic poet, Abu-l-Fath al Busti (d. after 1009), who wrote: "Fear God, and seek the guidance of His religion, then after these two, seek *falsafa* . . . Ignore people who criticize it, for a man's *falsafa* is the blunting of ignorance," quoted by Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 160.

speak out about philosophy, but without angering those for whom faith placed such a great role in their perception of reality. Averroes developed a three-step plan to make this happen.[123] First, he attempted to uncover the "real" or "pristine" Aristotle and to remove interpretations that had been added over the centuries that clouded a clear understanding of this man's actual ideas.

> [Aristotle] was confused with Plotinus, reconciled with Plato, declared to be a disciple of [the Egyptian god of letters] Hermes, and even hailed as a venerable monotheistic sage. It is no wonder that his genuine teaching had remained virtually unknown until the latter part of the twelfth century, which witnessed the appearance on the philosophical scene of the first and last great Aristotelian, Ibn Rushd.[124]

Averroes has generally been regarded as primarily a rationalist philosopher whose devotion to Islam and the theological agenda of his peers was perhaps disingenuous. Yet this conclusion should be rejected for a more sympathetic understanding of Averroes as a devotee of the religion of his culture, Islam. "His philosophical thought includes important roles for religion in the development of human powers toward their fulfillment in the highest intellectual insight into God and his creation, even as it gives critical assessment to the truth and efficacy of religious arguments and statements."[125] This important insight by Richard Taylor is exactly the bridge that will be used by Latin Christian scholars in the next century.

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[123] Averroes, *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy: A Translation, with Introduction and Notes,* trans. G. F. Hourani (London: Luzac and Co., Ltd., 1967).

[124] Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy,* 302.

[125] Richard C. Taylor, "Averroes: Religious Dialectic and Aristotelian Philosophical Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 197.

Averroes proceeded to produce the most detailed commentaries on Aristotle's treatises that any scholar in any language had created in the 1500 years since Aristotle first wrote them.[126] Of Aristotle, Averroes commented, "I believe that this man was a model in nature and the exemplar which nature found for showing final human perfection."[127] Colish adds, "Averroes achieved the most thorough grasp of Aristotle of anyone up to his time."[128] Therese-Anne Druart proposes that beyond Avicenna, al-Ghazali may have been a primary prompter for Averroes to go back to read Aristotle for himself and thus find those innate ideas so fundamental to Aristotle himself. "Al-Ghazali's attacks against the falasifa and emanation in particular, as well as the close reading required for paraphrases and literal commentaries, awoke Averroes from his dogmatic slumber and changed him into a reformist who preached a return to uncontaminated Aristotelianism."[129] One limit however on Averroes' works is that he knew no Greek, and had to rely on earlier Arabic translators (who sometimes inadvertently added a neo-Platonic bias, which he was so anxious, but not always successful, to purge).

Second, Averroes wrote a treatise on his own in 1180, titled *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, in which he delivered a direct blow to the work of al-Ghazali's

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[126] See Oliver Leaman, *Averroes and his Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[127] Quoted by Taylor, "Averroes: Religious Dialectic and Aristotelian Philosophical Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 189.

[128] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 145.

[129] Therese-Anne Druart, "Metaphysics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 346.

attacks on philosophy, showing that philosophy had been misunderstood and unfairly judged.

Third, Averroes reaffirmed an old adage his neo-Platonist predecessors knew well: one truth exists, manifested in many forms. For Averroes, the revealed dogmas of the Koran *properly interpreted* were as true as the best doctrines of Aristotle *properly interpreted.* However, who was qualified to "properly interpret" Truth? Here Averroes turned to a source that no one could dispute, the Qur'an itself: "It is [Muhammad] who has revealed the Book to you . . . some of its verses are unambiguous . . . and the others are ambiguous . . . only God and those confirmed in knowledge know its interpretation."[130] Averroes then sealed his argument by identifying "those confirmed in knowledge" as the philosophers.

Averroes' methodology is particularly enlightening as he strives to balance faith and reason:

> Referring to the three modes of proof described in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, exhortation, dialectic, and demonstration, Averroes states that exhortation, which revelation provides and which faith accepts, is appropriate for the uneducated masses. For them, adherence to the moral law of the Koran by faith lads to the truth. Dialectical argument, which rests on premises that are probabilities and which yields conclusions that are likewise probable, not certain, is the method of the theologians, who combine faith and reason. Theology conduces the educated to the truth. The third and most rigorous type of argument is demonstration, which uses proofs that are entirely rational, proofs verifiable deductively and empirically, proofs that yield scientific certitude. This is the method of the philosophers. It is suited only to the most highly trained minds and it leads them to the truth.[131]

[130] Qur'an, ch. 3, v. 5.

[131] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 146.

In principle, the conclusions of revelation, theology, and philosopher should take us to the same endpoint; there are indeed three paths to a single truth.[132] However, Averroes' seeming separation of reason and religion in *The Decisive Treatise* provided a justification, for some, of a doctrine of separation of religion and state. Thus, Averroism is considered by some writers as a precursor to modern secularism, and Averroes the founding father of secular thought in Western Europe.[133] George Sarton, the father of the history of science, writes: "Averroes was great because of the tremendous stir he made in the minds of men for centuries. A history of Averroism would include up to the end of the sixteenth-century, a period of four centuries which would perhaps deserve as much as any other to be called the Middle Ages, for it was the real transition between ancient and modern methods."[134] Menocal convincingly states, "For several centuries to come, his name would be universally known and would invoke loathing or inestimable respect, would be either sacred or anathema. It is he, in many ways and for some time, who was the new Aristotle of Europe."[135]

Averroes was a tireless writer, producing treatises and commentaries on a wide variety of philosophical topics and works, primarily related to Aristotle,

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[132] Averroes, *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroes' Exposition of Religious Arguments*, trans. I.Y. Najjar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[133] Roger Arnaldez offers an excellent discussion on this topic in his *Averroes: A Rationalist in Islam* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000).

[134] George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science* (Huntington, NY: Krieger Publishing Company, 1975).

[135] Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History,* 56.

although he did write a commentary on Plato's *Republic.*[136] Amazingly, his influence on his own peers was weak,[137] but his influence on Western Europe, as we will see in the next chapter, was immense. While Aristotle had gained the title, "The Philosopher," due to his great work, Averroes was crowned with the title, "The Commentator," by Thomas Aquinas in the next century. Within a single generation after Averroes, almost all of his works had been translated into Latin. "In the following century, scholars ranging from the Jewish Ibn Maimun . . . to the Latin-Christian Thomas Aquinas avidly read Ibn Rushd's writings. In 1472, Ibn Rushd's commentaries appeared in print alongside the first Latin edition of Aristotle's writings."[138] Blumenthal reminds us that the production of commentaries on ancient Greek philosophy remained a dominant method of "doing philosophy" throughout the early Middle ages and into the time of Averroes and beyond. "The technique of commentary on [Greek philosophers' works] reached its fullest deployment with Averroes, who wrote not one but three commentaries on many of [Aristotle's] treatises, traditionally known as short, middle and long commentaries . . . most likely . . . intended for students and scholars working at different levels."[139] Of the series of

[136] He did not have access to any text of Aristotle's *Politics.* As a substitute for this, he commented on Plato's *Republic,* arguing that the state there described was the same as the original constitution of the Arabs.

[137] For most Muslim theologians, Averroes' ideas represented everything they most feared about philosophy.

[138] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 122.

[139] Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity*, 172. Averroes is noted for writing that because al-Andalus enjoyed a similar climate to Greece, so the intellectual interests and skills were similar, and thus his connection to Aristotle.

commentaries written by Averroes, 38 titles have survived either in Arabic, Hebrew, or Latin.[140]

It must be reemphasized that Averroes' work was so much more than a mere transmission of Greek ideas, it involved interpretation and creative synthesis. What Averroes offered the later Latin world was Greek plus Arabic ideas. "On the whole, the work of Averroes marks a return to the authentic Aristotelianism . . . All the same, the Aristotelianism of the Commentator, by comparison with that of Aristotle himself, has some explanations and additions of considerable importance, especially in metaphysics (creative causality) and psychology (monopsychism)."[141]

5.59 Ibn Maimun (Maimonides)

Abu Imran Musa ibn Ubaid Allah ibn Maimun (1135-1204; Latin Moses Maimonides)[142] was not an Arabic-Islamic scholar but an Arabic-Judaic scholar.[143] He grew up in Cordoba, but fled Spain due to Jewish persecution, and ended his career in Cairo. He tried to reconcile Jewish theology with Aristotelianism, having studied the work of Averroes. He produced material that enhanced the study of Aristotle, notably his key work, *Guide to the Perplexed.* His work also contributed to the ongoing influence of Averroes, providing another vehicle from which Greek ideas

[140] Cf. Harry A. Wolfson, "Revised Plan for Publication of a *Corpus Commentariorum Averrois in Aristotelem*," *Speculum* XXXVIII (1963): 90f.

[141] Van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West,* 20.

[142] I will consistently refer to Ibn Maimun as Maimonides, his traditional Latinized and more familiar Western name.

[143] Interestingly, Jews living in Islamic lands often wrote in Arabic but using Hebrew script.

could flow to Latin Europe. He was later referred to in Latin Europe simply as "the Rabbi" or "Rabbi Moses." I will not pursue here the deep dialogue that could be created concerning the role of medieval Jewish thinkers. Suffice it to say that Jewish scholars, like Maimonides participated actively in the intellectual life of the Muslim West and Spain.[144]

5.6 The Fate of Philosophy within Islam

Some historians have tried to belittle the achievements of the Arabic philosophers in particular, and Islamic culture in general, by claiming that their work was unoriginal, a mere copy or imitator of former genius. "Such a judgment is all wrong. In a sense, nothing can be more deeply original than the genuine hunger for knowledge which possessed the Arabic leaders."[145] The Islamic Empire found itself in a uniquely enriched geographical region from which they could synthesize ideas from many originators into something new. Their location in the Middle East allowed them to encounter Greek, Roman, Christian, and Jewish ideas from the West and Hindu and Chinese ideas from the East. Islamic culture was dynamic and freely traded material and intellectual goods with its neighbors, as opposed to the rather static state of Byzantium during most of this period. Philosophy is never created *ex nihilo,* and the Muslims had the best of all worlds to draw upon as they created novel thinking derived their prime intermediary position in both history and geography. In

[144] Refer to the interesting essay by Steven Harvey, "Islamic Philosophy and Jewish Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 349-369.

[145] Sarton, *The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East,* 29.

fact, to label the Islamic Empire as Middle Eastern is to ignore their connections to the farthest east and west points then known to civilization.

Others might say that many, if not most, of these translators and philosophers were non-Muslims and non-Arab and Islam should receive little if any credit for the continuation of Greek thought. While credit can and should be shared, it was the Islamic Empire that provided the environment for this philosophical chain to continue and the cultural connections for ideas to travel from East to West. "In general, no work, especially one which is long and exacting, can be done unless somebody wants it badly enough and is willing to maintain the scholars engaged in it. The Arabic leaders were generally anxious to have the work done and ready to make its performance possible . . . The initiative was theirs,"[146] at least in the beginning period. It is significant also to note that when Rome conquered Greece, Rome allowed Greek philosophy to continue in Greek language, essentially allowing the captive to conquer the conqueror. "The Arab conquests, however, did not lead to the Arabs being 'taken captive' in this way. Instead they imposed their language and

[146] Ibid. In opposition, Peters makes this uncharacteristic demotion of Islamic culture and philosophy: "There were not many of those latter [genuine philosophers] in the history of Islamic civilization, and the odd dozen or so who can be identified as such have probably been treated to an undeserved celebrity because of their recognition by western scholars as the link between the ancient tradition and their own. Alkindius, Alfarabius, Avicenna, and Averroes continue to make their mandatory appearance along with Maimonides in histories of western philosophy, but in their own society the philosophers, the Muslim heirs of Plato and Aristotle, were a small and isolated band, self-taught or privately tutored—the "foreign sciences" found no place in any Islamic curriculum—who founded no schools and produced no disciples, were harassed and denounced by their contemporaries, and went generally unmarked in the enormous body of Arabic literature," "Hellenism in Islam,"*Paths from Ancient Greece,* ed. Thomas, 90. While Peters is accurate as far as factual information, the tone of this observation is markedly more negative than necessary and borders on a mockery of how philosophy worked in the Islam culture in general, as I have tried to show through the work of Gutas above.

something of their outlook on most of the peoples of the empire."[147] The Arab scholars proved remarkably skilled at drawing upon the legacies of the civilizations they conquered, while at the same time creating a unique synthesis within their own cultural milieu.[148]

"Of all three early medieval civilizations [Latin, Greek, Islam] Islam produced the most original work in science and philosophy. Thinkers in these fields grasped their principles and used them to make new and creative discoveries."[149] They were, especially during the ninth and tenth centuries, the primary intellectual culture in the Mediterranean region. "While Western Christians lost themselves in prayer and Eastern Christians in ritualized controversy, the cultural awakening that had not occurred in Byzantium became the glory of Islam."[150] The Arabs, Persians, and other Muslims were not content to be mere curators of philosophical curiosities, they advanced the work they inherited, but not so far that the Greek foundations could not be discriminated. As Sarton states, "The medieval Arabic-speaking peoples were . . . not blind and passive transmitters, but on the contrary they increased the Greek heritage and bequeathed a richer one to their Latin successors."[151] The Arabic

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[147] Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*, 10.

[148] Hollister and Bennett, *Medieval Europe: A Short History,* 99.

[149] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 130.

[150] Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children,* 78. To one anonymous tenth-century Arab geographer, this is how the Europeans appeared: ". . . their bodies are large, their natures gross, their manners harsh, their understanding dull, and their tongues heavy . . . The farther they live to the north, the more they are stupid, gross and brutish," quoted by Hollister and Bennett, *Medieval Europe: A Short History,* 100.

[151] Sarton, *The Incubation of the Western Culture in the Middle East,* 41. Bolgar adds, "Arab interest in the past was narrower . . . than the Byzantine, but within its narrower scope it was more

tradition built on what they learned. Southern makes this interesting comparison, as we ready ourselves for the next chapter in this historical analysis:

> It is the most astonishing event in the history of thought [the retention of Greek philosophy within Islam], just as the rise of Islam as a political force is the most astonishing fact in the history of institutions. Islam luxuriated in abundance, while the West was left with the Church Fathers, the classical and postclassical poets, the Latin schoolmasters—works of impressive solidity but not, at least in the early Middle Ages, wildly exciting. A comparison of the literary catalogues of the West with the lists of books available to the Moslem scholars makes a painful impression on a Western mind, and the contrast came as a bombshell to the Latin scholars of the twelfth century, who first had their eyes opened to the difference.[152]

Gutas goes on to point out a critical element in the work of the Arabic-speaking philosophers that will help us understand our concluding chapter, as we move from Islam to Latin Europe:

> [Arabic translation and use of Greek philosophy] demonstrated for the first time in history that . . . philosophical thought [is] international, not bound to a specific language or culture. Once the Arabic culture by forged by early Abbasid society historically established the universality of Greek . . . philosophical thought, it provided the model for and facilitated the later application of this concept . . . in the West, both in . . . the renaissance of the twelfth century and in the Renaissance proper.[153]

But, as Laughlin points out, the Muslim period of philosophical continuity would not last long beyond this period. "After the two contemporaries, Ibn Rushd and Ibn Maimun, no significant Arabic philosophers (Aristotelian or otherwise) appeared in Islamic culture—*ever.* In Islamic-Spain, the study of logic and philosophy (as parts

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thorough; and it was not limited to simple imitation or repetition" "The Greek Legacy," in *The Legacy of Greece*, ed. Finley, 449.

[152] Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages,* 8-9.

[153] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 192.

of "alien learning") became extinct, extinguished by popular and theological hostility to non-Islamic culture."[154] There was always a stream in Islam that distrusted both philosophy and philosophers.[155] While it is difficult to define what is meant by "orthodox" Islam, it does appear true that the more conservative elements within Islam eventually pushed philosophy outside the safe boundaries of dialogue and discussion as again, as in Byzantium, the division between faith and reason grew larger.[156] This kind of division is stated by, interestingly, a philosopher, Abu-Sulayman as-Sigistani:

> They [Islamic theologians] thought that perfection is achieved when Greek philosophy and Arab [Islamic] law are brought together in an orderly arrangement . . . They thought they could insert philosophy . . . into Islamic law and attach Islamic law to philosophy. This, however, is an aspiration on the way to which there are insurmountable obstacles . . . Islamic law is derived from God, by means of an ambassador between Him and humans, by way of revelation.[157]

Another example is provided by Abdallah ibn-abi-Zayd (922-998), a legal scholar, gave this view of philosophy and of the Abbasid's poor judgment in opening this dangerous ideological door:

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[154] Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 124. See also Farhad Daftary, ed., *Intellectual Traditions in Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

[155] Majid Fakhry, *Philosophy, Dogma and the Impact of Greek Thought in Islam* (Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1994). See also the discussion by Iysa A.Bello, *The Medieval Islamic Controversy between Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989).

[156] Gutas is not confident that Islamic "orthodoxy" can be defined in this era and is equally unconvinced that philosophy was pushed outside the boundaries of religious discussion by anything resembling a "majority" position. He sees in Islam no inherent division between faith and reason (Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 155ff). While Gutas is able to solicit important evidence for this thesis, he seems to miss the fact that Islamic culture as a whole did indeed move toward a fundamentalist position after the 12th century and that Greek philosophical inquiry did all but disappear from Arabic intellectual writing after Averroes.

[157] Quoted by Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 164.

> When the caliphate passed from [the Umayyads] and devolved upon the Abbasid dynasty, their state was based upon the Persians, who held positions of leadership, while the hearts of most of the leaders among them were filled with unbelief and hate for the Arabs and for the Islamic state. They introduced within Islam currents ideas that would permit the destruction of Islam. Had it not been for the fact that God Almighty had promised His Prophet that his religion and its adherents would be victorious on the Day of Judgment, they would have abolished Islam. They did, however, make breaches on its walls and damage its pillars, but God will fulfill His promise, God willing! [sic] The first current which they introduced was to export in Islamic lands the books of the Greeks which were then translated into Arabic, and circulated widely among the Muslims. The reason of their being exported from the land of the Byzantines into Islamic territories was Yahya ibn-Halid ibn-Barmak.[158]

This line of reasoning is significantly different from the view that Greek philosophy was actually of Arab/Persian ancestry and thus worthy of study and use, as we explored above. This view sees philosophy as the enemy of Islam and faith. In fact, this view was popularly recounted in a way that made Yahya's acquisition of philosophy a trick of Byzantium. According to this stream of Islamic thought and as outlined by Abdallah ibn-abi-Zayd, the Byzantine emperor, in whose land the Greek books originally resided, was afraid that if the Christians examined these books they would leave their faith and revert to the religion/philosophy of the Greeks, thereby ruining his empire. So he collected all the ancient books and had them hidden in a secret location. When Yahya took control of the Abbasid state, he heard about these hidden books and requested to borrow them. The emperor was delighted with this request and sent them to Yahya with the message, "No need to return these." In this way, he reasoned, "the Muslims will be afflicted with these books and we shall be rid

[158] Quoted by Gutas, Ibid., 156. Gutas admits that there was an anti-philosophical undercurrent in Islam but he makes the argument that these detractors were isolated and motivated by political not religious issues. Yahya ibn-Halid ibn-Barmak (d. 806) was vizier (chief adviser) under the caliph al-Mahdi.

of their evil. For I am not sure that there will not come someone after me who will dare to make these books public to the people, in which case they will fall into what we are afraid of." Abdallah ibn-abi-Zayd then ends with this moral: "Very few people ever applied themselves to the study of [these books] and were saved from heresy. Then Yahya established in his house disputations and dialectical argumentation on matters that should not be discussed, and every adherent of a religion began to discuss his religion and raise objections against it relying on himself alone [i.e., disregarding revelation].[159] The Arabic poet Abu Said ibn-Dust (d. 1040) writes:

> You who seek religion, avoid the paths of error,
> Lest your religion be snatched from you unawares.
> Shiism is destruction, Mutazilism is innovation,
> Polytheism is infidelity, and philosophy is a lie.[160]

Peters laments, then offers hope: "They all perished together, Spanish Islam, Arabian Aristotelianism, and Ibn Rushd. But there were heirs; within a century all three had come to life again at the University of Paris."[161] Colish, in agreement with Peters, leads us to the next chapter of this research, "Thus, the extraordinary advances in speculative thought initially fostered by the patronage of Muslim rulers came to a halt after the twelfth century. In the sequel, it was Western Europe rather than Islam that capitalized on this achievement once it was translated into Latin."[162]

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[159] Quoted by Gutas, Ibid.,157, citing Galal-ad-Din as-Suyuti, *Sawn al-mantiq wa-l-kalam an fann al-mantiq wa-l-kalam,* ed. Ali Sami an-nassar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Hangi, 1947), 6-8.

[160] Ibid., 160.

[161] Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs,* 220.

[162] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 131.

Our line of historical research has shown us that Greek philosophy was seriously hindered in both the East and West remnants of the former Roman Empire. However, a new civilization seized the Middle East and southern Mediterranean regions, and inherited, with zeal, the Greek intellectual tradition. The Islamic Empire of the Middle Ages engaged in a centuries-long translation movement that placed most of the ancient Greek philosophical works into the language of Arabic, with an emphasis on Aristotle and an underlying current of Platonic thought as well. These Arabic-speaking philosophers filled the intellectual gap that presented itself in the Middle Ages by continuing the Greek philosophical tradition, through active discussion, interpretation and involvement with key Greek ideas. This pattern of learning and thinking circumscribed the Islamic Empire, from East to West. However, as Islam moved into a more conservative period of development, the philosophical dynamism of this great medieval empire began to fade. One of its last outposts was to be found in the western provinces of the Islamic sphere of influence, in the region today called Spain. Here, the last great Arabic philosopher, Averroes, maintained and made available the Greek philosophical treasury to those who were in contact with the vestiges of the collapsing Islamic community in Spain, which included both Jews and Christians. From this serendipitous and multicultural community of scholars, the Greek tradition was allowed to move out of the dying hands of Islam's philosophical school into the eager but as yet untrained arms of Latin Europe.

The scene is like watching a track relay race where the runner, who has just completed the circuit, races to the point of passing the baton to the next runner in line.

As the first runner approaches, there is a stumbling action and the runner begins to lose balance. Just before falling completely to the ground, the two runner's hands connect and the baton is passed to the second runner who firmly grasps the baton and begins to pick up speed on the next leg of the race. In our research, which has traced the history of philosophical continuity, the failing runner represents the Islamic Empire and the Arabic scholars, who ran the race well during their time and without whom the race would have been in jeopardy; there were no other qualified or interested runners to take their place. The fresh runner represents the Western European scholars of France, England, and Italy, who have been waiting on the sidelines for their turn to be engaged in the race. The baton, of course, represents the Greek philosophical/ educational tradition.[163] In the next chapter, we will conclude our analysis and see how the next runner handles the following leg of the race. Our gaze shifts from Islam to Latin Christianity, from Arabic Spain to Western Europe.

[163] All analogies, of course, break down at some point if pushed too far. In this case, representing the Greek philosophical tradition as a static baton is inaccurate—the baton has in some ways been changed by its mere handling by its "runners," as I have described in this chapter and will further explore in the next.

Chapter 6

Greek Philosophy Revived in Medieval Europe: Aquinas and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance

I have presented evidence showing that the continuity of Greek philosophy in history has an important partner within the medieval Islamic Empire and the Arabic philosophical tradition. I have traced the course of philosophical progress within "Western" culture and have outlined how both Byzantium and western Europe, after the fall of Rome, were poor candidates to further the authentic use of either the Platonic or Aristotelian sources or patterns of thinking. Instead, the Greek intellectual tradition was safeguarded, used and enhanced by Arab thinkers for over half a millennium. By the time we reach the twelfth century, the Islamic period of active philosophical inquiry is beginning to fade, and its last stronghold happens to be found in the southwestern corner of Europe. As Latin Christianity re-exerts its influence in the Iberian peninsular region, a natural osmosis of thought and literature begins to flow from Arabic into Latin, from East into West. From this connecting point, the Greek philosophers are introduced into Western Europe in tentative but concrete ways, to the extent that the intellectual patterns of Western thought are forever stamped with their image. As the possibilities of faith and reason becoming partners rather than adversaries begin to emerge in the work of Middle Age theologians like Aquinas, the environment becomes amenable to an infusion of Greek rationality and the path of classical Greek philosophy into Western thinking is cleared. This final chapter will simply connect the last dot in our historical analysis of the journey of

Plato and Aristotle from ancient Greece to Western Europe. The key discovery in this foray into philosophical archeology was presented in the last chapter, as the indisputable role of Islam was demonstrated. The only aspect of this study that remains is to show how the Greek tradition flowed into Europe in the later Middle Ages and led directly to the Italian Renaissance and to what we know today as the Western mindset or philosophical tradition. To connect this last section of history, I will explore the Arabic-Latin translation movement in Spain, the rise of universities and scholasticism in western Europe, the significant work of Aquinas in marrying philosophy and theology within Western-Christian tradition, and finally, I will show how the roots of the Renaissance were embedded in the late Middle Ages revival of Greek thinking, moving us into the modern period of philosophical and educational thought.

6.1 *Reconquista* and *Covivencia*: Christians and Muslims in Spain

The fact that Arabic philosophers found their last productive arena in Spain may be an accident of history, but it certainly provides the key geographical element in the history of the Western philosophical journey. To understand this supremely significant historical sidebar, a brief review of Iberian politics is necessary.

After the infusion of Muslim rule in al-Andalus beginning in the eighth century, there was parallel anti-Muslim activity from Christian Europeans. The *Reconquista* (English: Re-conquest), as this movement is called, was an almost eight-century-long process during which Christians re-conquered the Iberian peninsula

(modern Portugal and Spain) from the Muslim and Moorish states of Al-Andalus. The Umayyad conquest of Hispania from the Visigoths occurred during the early eighth century; the *Reconquista* began almost immediately, in 722, with the Battle of Covadonga. In 1236, the last Muslim center, Granada, and the last Iberian Islamic ruler, Mohammed ibn Alhamar, were finally subjugated by Ferdinand III of Castile, and Granada became a vassal state of the Christian kingdom.[1] In 1492 (the year Columbus sailed to the New World), the last Muslim ruler on the peninsula, Abuabd Allah Muhammad XII (also known as Boabdil of Granada), surrendered to Ferdinand and Isabella. This resulted in the creation of a united Christian nation encompassing most of modern day Spain.[2] (The Portuguese *Reconquista* had culminated in 1249 with the subjugation of the Algarve by king Afonso III.)[3]

The final period of the *Reconquista* corresponds with the Crusade concept advocated by the Latin Church.[4] The Christian Crusades were a series of military conflicts of a religious character waged by Christians during 1095–1291, most of which were sanctioned by the Pope.[5] The Crusades originally had the goal of recapturing Jerusalem and the sacred "Holy Land" from Muslim rule and were

[1] Refer to the interesting ancient accounts, one Christian and one Muslim of the conquest of Granada, Hernando del Pulgar, "Cronicas de los reyes de Castilla," translated from Castilian by Teofilo Ruiz, and the anonymous "Nubdhat al-asr," translated from the Arabic by L.P. Harvey, both in Constable, *Medieval Iberia: Readings*, 343-344, 350-351.

[2] See Appendix G.

[3] See O'Callaghan's excellent set of maps as well as his chapter, "The Great Reconquest," in Joseph O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975).

[4] See Watt's helpful discussion on the connection of the *reconquista* and the Crusades, in *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* 44-57.

[5] Hans Eberhard Mayer, *The Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

originally launched in response to a call from the Eastern "Orthodox" Byzantine Empire for help against the expansion of the Muslim Seljuk dynasty into Anatolia (Asia Minor or modern Turkey). Since the time of Constantine (4th century), Christians had gone on pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Even though Muslims had ruled Jerusalem since 638, Christians were still allowed to visit this city. By the eleventh century, however, the situation had changed. Just as the number and frequency of pilgrimages to Jerusalem were at new peaks, the Seljuk Turks took over control of Jerusalem and hindered pilgrimages. There were seven major Crusades; the first began in 1095 with Pope Urban II's famous speech to retake Jerusalem because "God wills it!" (*Deus vult!*), and the last ended in 1291 when Acre, the last of the Latin holdings in Palestine, was lost.[6]

The Crusades to the eastern end of the Mediterranean were largely unsuccessful from a military point of view for the Europeans, but the positive impact of these incursions into the Middle East was the connection that East and West invariably made as Christian and Muslim forces lived in close proximity to each other.[7] That idea exchange occurred during this period is clear, but the environment for philosophical dialogue was not conducive for extended impact on Europe.[8] So we

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[6] Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades, Vol III: The Kingdom of Acre and the Later Crusades* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1954).

[7] For an interesting non-Western view of the Crusades, see Philip K. Hitti, trans., *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman & Warrior in the Period of the Crusades: Memoirs of Usamah Ibn-Munqidh* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000) as well as Francesco Gabrieli, ed., *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

[8] See, for example, Vladimir P. Goss, ed., *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange between East and West during the Period of the Crusades,* trans. E.J. Costello (Kalamazoo, MI.: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1986) and Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and*

will shift our focus from the Crusades of the East to the Crusades of the West, where Latin Christians waged a similar battle against Muslims in Spain, but with an entirely different setting and outcome.

The term "reconquista" is a politically biased term which points to a recapturing of land from a foreign power. While it is true that at times native Spaniards were fighting against Muslims, more often native Spaniards who had converted to Islam many generations previously were fighting non-native Spaniards from Western Europe.[9] The very fact that this "reconquest" took place over more than seven centuries shows the extent to which the Iberian peninsula was a thoroughly mixed society of Muslims, Christians, and Jews who, rather than constantly in battle and opposition to each other, had learned to live together and learn from each other. *La Convivencia* (literally: "the Coexistence" or "living together") is the term used to describe the situation just described.[10] From about 711 to 1492, concurrent with the

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Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages: Comparative Perspectives on Social and Cultural Formation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

[9] "The Christians under Muslim rule were so closely identified with the culture of the rulers in everything except religion that they came to be known as Mozarabs or 'arabizers,'" Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* 26. Examine the tone of the Middle Ages writer in Spain: "The Christians love to read the poems and romances of the Arabs; they study the Arab theologians and philosophers, not to refute them but to form a correct and elegant Arabic. Where is the layman who now reads the Latin commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, or who studies the Gospels, prophets or apostles? Alas! All talented young Christians read and study with enthusiasm the Arab books; they gather immense libraries at great expense; they despise the Christian literature as unworthy of attention. They have forgotten their language. For every one who can write a letter in Latin to a friend, there are a thousand who can express themselves in Arabic with elegance, and write better poems in this language than the Arabs themselves." Quoted by Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the West,* 21 from Paul Alvarus, *Indiculus Luminosus, P.L.* CXXI, 555-556, who is cited by Dozy, *Musulmans d'Espagne,* I, 317.

[10] *Convivencia* was also experienced between East and West to great degree in Sicily as well as, but to a lesser degree, in Syria and Palestine by the crusaders.

Reconquista, Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Spain lived in relative peace together. The term *convivencia* refers to the general religious toleration exhibited between these three faiths and, more importantly for our purposes, the interplay of cultural ideas between the three groups.[11] It was an interplay and fusion of social and cultural forces unique in the medieval world.[12] An example of this interconnection of cultures in Spain is found in the famous quote by al-Zubaidi, tutor of al-Hakam II (who came to power in Cordoba in 961 and created a library of 400,000 volumes): "All lands in their diversity are one, and men are all brothers and neighbors."[13] Even though Christian kingdoms were at war with the Muslims, within the lands not currently under dispute, Christians, Muslims, and Jews lived daily side by side.[14] In cities like Toledo there was a mix of mosques, churches, and synagogues. The intellectual interests treasured by the Muslim rulers were valued by the Christians and Jews; the

[11] Jerrilynn Denise Dodds, et al, eds., *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain* (George Braziller: 1992). For an anthology of Christian and Muslim sources during this period, see Colin Smith, Charles Melville and Ahmad Ubaydli, eds., *Christians and Moors in Spain* (Vol. 1: Oxford: Aris and Phillips, 1988; Vol. 2: Warminster, PA: Warminster Press, Ltd., 1989; Vol. 3: Oxford: Aris and Phillips, 1992).

[12] John A. Crow, *Spain: The Root and the Flower: An Interpretation of Spain and the Spanish People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[13] Omayma Abdel-Latif, "Bridging the Divide," *Al-Ahram* ,November 7–13, 2002, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/611/focus.htm>, accessed September 4, 2007.

[14] Fletcher reminds us that while the *convivencia* was long-lasting, that does not imply that all was harmonious at all times. James I of Aragon said in his autobiography, "The Moors are all traitors, and have often made us understand that whereas we treat them well, they are ever seeking to do us harm." Isa Yabir, a prominent Muslim intellectual of Sergovia said, "Do not employ the practices, uses or customs of the Christians." Cited by Fletcher, *Moorish Spain,* 135. In contrast to Fletcher's more negative review, see Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2003).

three cultures worked most closely together in the arenas of philosophy and science, areas generally outside of religious practice controversy.[15]

Under Muslim rule, Christians and Jews were usually tolerated within the mix of society. The same is true when Christians retook Spain with regard to Muslims; less, over time, in regard to Jews. When the Christian ruler Alfonso VI conquered Toledo, he promised the Muslim inhabitants that they could continue their religious practices. In Toledo, the church of Santa Maria la Blanca was even shared for a while: Muslims using it on Fridays, Jews on Saturdays, and Christians on Sundays. Alfonso VI's physician was Granada-born Joseph Nasi Ferruziel, a prominent Jew who owned large estates around Toledo. Talented Jews and Muslims would hold other important positions in the court of the Christian kings. Alfonso X even granted some foreign scholars the title of *caballero,* gentlemen or knight. It is during this period that "the thousands of Arabic loan words made their way into the Romance vernaculars which were fast turning into Castilian, Portuguese and Catalan."[16] One of the most important of these connecting cultural links during the period of *convivencia* involved translation of Arabic, Hebrew and even ancient Greek texts into Latin, as we will explore in the next section.

[15] See the scholarly research on *convivencia* in Lucy Pick, *Conflict and Coexistence: Archbishop Rodrigo and the Muslims and Jews of Medieval Spain* (Oxford: Oxbow Books: 2004) and Chris Lowney, *A Vanished World: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[16] Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, 141.

6.2 Greek Philosophy: Arabic into Latin

The introduction of Arabic texts into the studies of the West divides the history of science and philosophy in the Middle Ages into two distinct periods. Before the availability of Islamic learning, the Western mind had to be satisfied with fragments of the Roman schools which had been cobbled together by western teachers like Boethius, Marianus Capella, Bede, and Isidore. As far as knowledge of Greek literature, before the twelfth century the language of Plato and Aristotle was virtually unknown. Even the Greek alphabet was lost. "At the hands of the medieval scribe a Greek word becomes gibberish or is omitted with *grecum* inserted in its place—it was 'all Greek' to him.'"[17] In the limited scheme of medieval education, there were seven kinds of study, or seven faculties of scholarship (the trivium and quadrivium). These were grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. The Muslim expansion into Spain brought with it a new worldview and new arenas of learning previously unrealized in Europe. The scholars of Islam in Spain brought with them a large body of studies in natural science developed by generations of men from traditions, ancient and contemporary. Included in the Arabic libraries was a fully developed mathematics of physics and astronomy, and the ancient Greek medical texts of Hippocrates and Galen In the realm of philosophy, they brought the entire body of Aristotle's writings as well as an extensive library of commentaries on Greek thought. The recovery of this ancient learning, supplemented by what the Arabs had gained through their own observations, constituted an

[17] Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the 12th Century* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1957, copyright 1927 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College), 280.

opportunity for an intellectual rebirth of Europe. "Far from being peripheral or secondary to the principal concerns and activities of those who remained speakers of Latin . . . the dominant world of the age in which Arabic was the classical language was rarely out of mind and never out of reach, and the effects of such contacts were widespread and central. They were often the intellectual lifeblood of northern European centers."[18]

The worldview of Europe was further shaken throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as Latin Christians, traveling east to fight in the Crusades, discovered that the so-called infidels had a higher civilization than their own. The Muslims had hospitals, sewers, irrigation, and for battle, heavy artillery in the form of great iron crossbows. In debate, the Muslims were more reasonable, using the logical tools of Aristotle. For Europeans, it was a kind of culture shock that shook the foundations of their identity: the self-discovery of their own backwardness![19]

The twelfth century saw a major search by European scholars for new learning, which led them to the Arabic fringes of Europe, to the intellectually rich deposits to be found in Islamic Spain and Sicily.[20] As early as the end of the tenth

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[18] Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History,* 64.

[19] "The extent of Islamic rule . . . was formidable. In the early twelfth century, men regarded the world as consisting of three parts, Asia, Africa, and Europe. The largest of these, Asia, was thought to be almost entirely Muslim, and so was much of Africa . . . nearly two-thirds of the world was Muslim. For any Christian who had come in contact with Muslims . . . their unshakable sense of superiority must have been disturbing . . . The distortion of the image of Islam among Europeans was necessary to compensate them for this sense of inferiority," Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* 82.

[20] Sicily, the island west of the "toe" of Italy, had been part of the Byzantine Empire until 878, was under Muslim control from 878-1060, and came under Norman control between 1060 and 1090. As a consequence, the Norman Kingdom of Sicily maintained a trilingual culture, which made it an ideal place for translations. Sicily also maintained relations with the Greek East, which allowed for a

century, European scholars had purposely traveled to Spain to enhance their education.[21] Translations, however, did not begin in Spain for another century.[22] For them, Toledo was a special intellectual jackpot, being the seat of scholarship in Spain under the Arabs. The conquest of Toledo by Christians led to the establishment there of the capitol of the Kingdom of Castile. That city became the most important center of Arabic-Latin translation, even as Arab-Latin connections spread across Spain.

That the history of Western philosophy is strongly dependent on texts written in Arabic is attested to by the sheer volume of works that were translated, perhaps numbering in the thousands.[23] Translations were produced throughout Spain and surrounding areas. Plato of Tivoli worked in Catalonia, Herman of Carinthia in Northern Spain and across the Pyrenees in Languedoc, Hugh of Santalla in Aragon, Robert of Ketton in Navarre, Robert of Chester in Segovia, Hermann of Carinthia, with his pupil Rudolf of Bruges, Robert of Chester in central Spain, and Adelard of Bath in Sicily. Key locations of translation work in Spain included Barcelona, Tarasona, Sagovia, Leon, Pamplona, as well as beyond the Pyrenees at Toulouse, Beziers, Narbonne, and Marseilles, in the first quarter of the twelfth century. Later, after 1116, the most important center of translation was, as mentioned above, the

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minimal exchange of ideas and manuscripts. Although the Sicilians generally translated directly from the Greek, when Greek texts were not available, they would translate from Arabic.

[21] As well, Arabic culture began to travel northward into Europe. "Through trade contacts and through political presence in Spain and Sicily the superior culture of the Arabs gradually made its way into western Europe," Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* 29.

[22] Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century,* ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 421-462.

[23] Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children,* 128.

great cathedral library of Toledo. Toledo was a center of multilingual culture, with a large population of Arabic-speaking Christians and had prior importance as a center of learning. This tradition of scholarship, and the books that embodied it, survived the conquest of the city by King Alfonso VI in 1085. Toledo became a center of translations, which were on a scale and importance that had "no match in the history of western culture."[24]

Ferdinand III, king of Castile and Leon, encouraged the sharing of languages, and on his death in 1252, he was enshrined with an epitaph in Latin, Spanish, Hebrew, and Arabic, all languages that were part of his Spanish kingdom. His son, Alfonso X ("The Wise"), set up the school of translators in Toledo to continue this work. Among the early translators at Toledo were Avendauth (who some have identified with Abraham Ibn Daud), who translated Avicenna's encyclopedia,[25] the *Kitab al-Shifa* (The Book of Healing), in cooperation with Domingo Gundisalvo, Archdeacon of Cuellar. Alfonso of Toledo's translations into Latin included Averroes' *De separatione primi principii*. John of Seville's translations included the works of al-Battani, Thabit ibn Qurra, Maslamah ibn Ahmad al-Majriti, al-Farabi,

[24] Charles Burnett, "The Coherence of the Arabic-Latin Translation Program in Toledo in the Twelfth Century," *Science in Context* 14 (2001): 249-288. See also, Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump, eds., *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts; Volume One: Logic and the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and Robert Pasnau, ed., *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts; Volume Three: Mind and Knowledge* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[25] Note that these translators often worked in several different branches of learning including science, medicine, and philosophy. This parallels to some extent the work of Plato and Aristotle who also worked in a variety of disciplines, showing their metaphysically coherent view of reality. See Appendix H for a more complete list of Arabic-Latin translators related to Greek philosophy.

Abu Mashar, al-Ghazali, and al-Farghani.[26] There was nothing particularly organized about the translation movement of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Many different scholars were at work, at different times and in different places or at the same time but in different places, usually (though not always) in ignorance of what others were doing. Work was, inevitably, duplicated, which added to the mass of translations that became available.[27]

The most prolific of the translators to work in Spain was the Italian Gerard of Cremona. He came to Toledo about 1140 and stayed there until his death in 1187, translating 87 books, including Ptolemy's *Almagest,* al-Khwarizmi's *On Algebra* and *Almucabala,* Archimedes' *On the Measurement of the Circle,* Aristotle's *On the Heavens,* Euclid's *Elements of Geometry,* Jabir ibn Aflah's *Elementa astronomica,* al-Kindi's *On Optics*, al-Farghani's *On Elements of Astronomy on the Celestial Motions,* al-Farabi's *On the Classification of the Sciences,* the chemical and medical works of al-Rhazi, the works of Thabit ibn Qurra and Hunayn ibn Ishaq, and the works of al-Zarkali, Jabir ibn Aflah, the Banu Musa, Abu Kamil, Abu al-Qasim, and Ibn al-

[26] The following is a list of a few of the Greek and Arabic works which were translated from Arab manuscripts during the twelfth century, which will indicate the extent of the intellectual revival that took place at that time: Euclid's *Elements, Optics, Catoptics, and Data;* Apollonius' preface to his *Conic Sections;* Archimedes' *Measurement of the Circle,* Ptolemy's *Almagest, Optics, Planisphere, and Quadripartitum;* Heron's *Pneumatics,* Hippocrates' *Aphorisms;* Aristotle's *Meteorologica I-IV, Physics, De Caelo, De Generatione et Corruptione, Posterior Analytics, Parva Naturalia, Metaphysics I-IV, and De Anima;* Theodosius' *Spherics;* Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De Motu et Tempore;* Proclus' *De Motu; v*arious medical treatises of both Hippocratus and Galen and their respective medical schools, as well as the extensive Arabic contributions advancing their medical traditions; al-Kwarismi's trigonometric tables and his Algebra.

[27] Fletcher, *Moorish Spain,* 150.

Haytham.[28] An obituary notice penned by his pupils tells us what interest he had in Spain:

> He was trained from childhood at centers of philosophical study and had come to a knowledge of all of this that was known to the Latins . . . [so] he went to Toledo. There, seeing the abundance of books in Arabic on every subject, and regretting the poverty of the Latins in these things, he learned the Arabic language in order to be able to translate. In this way he passed on the Arabic literature in the manner of the wise man who, wandering through a green field, links up a crown of flowers, made not just from any, but from the prettiest. To the end of his life he continued to transmit to the Latin world (as if to his own beloved heir) whatever books he thought finest, in many subjects, as accurately and as plainly as he could.[29]

One of Gerard's students, the Englishman Daniel of Morley, explains that although Gerard knew Arabic he often employed an assistant, Ghalid the Mozarab, who translated from the Arabic text into the vernacular by word of mouth to Gerard, who then wrote a translation into Latin.[30]

At the close of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, Mark of Toledo translated the Qur'an and various medical works. Alfred the Englishman is noted by Roger Bacon as a key translator from Arabic. Michael Scot (c. 1175-1232) translated the works of al-Betrugi in 1217, al-Bitruji's *On the Motions of the*

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[28] Note the close combination of translations in both science and philosophy. "In the Middle Ages, as in ancient Greece, philosophy and science were closely allied, if not inseparable; indeed in most medieval classifications of knowledge science was only a branch of philosophy," Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century,* 341.

[29] Cited by Fletcher, *Moorish Spain,* 151.

[30] Ibid. The interest in learning the Arabic language was enhanced by an active desire by Latin Christians to evangelize Muslims and to minister to Arabic-speaking Christians also fostered the learning of the Arabic language. Would-be missionaries were trained in both Latin and Arabic. Schools were established to teach Europeans the Arabic tongue in cities throughout Spain. However, several of the early translators into Latin did use Arabic intermediaries to assist their work. "In view of this awkward procedure, producing translations twice removed from the original, it was amazing how accurate were the final versions," Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages,* 358.

Heavens, and Averroes' influential commentaries on the scientific works of Aristotle. David the Jew (c. 1228-1245) translated the works of al-Rhazi into Latin. Arnaldus de Villa Nova's (1235-1313) translations include the works of Avicenna, Qusta ibn Luqa, and Galen.

Meanwhile, outside of Spain, James of Venice, Henricus Aristippus, and a certain Johannes were responsible for translating directly from Greek Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and the *Analytica Posteriora* which was the only part of his *Organon* probably not translated by Boethius. However, neither in terms of accuracy nor their subsequent impact did these Greek-Latin translations match the Arabic-Latin translations of Gerard of Cremona, John of Seville (sometimes called Avendaut), Michael the Scot, Hermannus Alemannus, Hugh of Santalla, Dominicus Gundissalinus (sometimes called Gundissalvi), and a group of Jewish scholars including Petrus Alphonsi, Savasorda, and Abraham ben Ezra. Sponsored by a great patron of Arabic learning, Raymond, Bishop of Toledo, those translations contributed in a decisive way to the revival of Greek thought in Western Europe. Specifically, the translations of Averroes' works by translators like Michael the Scot helped bring the Greek philosophical tradition into the mainstream of Latin thought. "In the Christian West, Latin translations of many of his [Averroes'] *Long Commentaries* were available to thinkers of the thirteenth century, where they served to play a

fundamentally important role in teaching the Latins how to read Aristotle with sympathy and insight."[31]

The Arabic-Latin translations of philosophical works were, certainly, centered on Aristotle. The Arab scholars had some access to Plato but Aristotle was always in the forefront of Arabic thought. However, Platonic works were available to some degree, not only through the prior work of Boethius, but through translations into Latin from the translations into Arabic by Arab scholars, as well as indirectly through their work and comment on Aristotle.[32] In fact, "Neoplatonic treatises mistakenly attributed to Aristotle by Arabic scholars were included in the *corpus* of his [Aristotle's] works."[33] As I have shown earlier, Aristotelianism assumes some basis in Plato, either as forerunner or adversary.[34] Even though Aristotle's reputation during the western Middle Ages eclipsed that of Plato, the European philosophical tradition still can be said to be a "series of footnotes to Plato," as noted by Whitehead

[31] Taylor, "Averroes: Religious Dialectic and Aristotelian Philosophical Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 196.

[32] Plato's original writings were essentially lost to Western civilization until they were brought from Constantinople in the century before its fall, for example by George Gemistos Plethon. However, Platonic thought was brought into Europe, at least in its basic outline, through other means prior to the fourteenth century, as noted above. For information on Arabic translations of Plato into Latin see, Dag Nikolaus Hasse, "Plato Arabico-Latinus," in *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages: A Doxographic Approach,* ed. Gersh and Hoenen, 31-65.

[33] Tierney and Painter, *Western Europe in the Middle Ages: 300-1475,* 388.

[34] "More attention was paid to the Aristotelianism of the Middle Ages and, to a lesser extent, that of the Renaissance, both of which, in ignorance of the Neoplatonism by which they were influenced in varying degrees in different locations, were assumed to be basically Peripatetic if not always entirely faithful to the thought of Aristotle himself," Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity*, 171.

in 1929.[35] "An age which strove to reconcile its authorities . . . reminds us that Aristotle is at times quite Platonic . . . [indeed] it so happens that the most active period of medieval Platonism falls in the twelfth century."[36]

Islamic learning in the Middle Ages was so far in advance of the European thought that the usage of Islamic knowledge by Europe via translations into Latin cannot be seen as other than the adoption of an entire foundation of knowledge upon which the later Renaissance was constructed. "Arabic thought provided European thought with new materials, and brought within its purview a whole new world of metaphysics."[37] Fletcher summarizes this section well:

> The learning of the Islamic world was discovered, appropriated, colonized by western scholars, and made widely accessible by means of translation into Latin, the international language of scholarship. This was one of the turning-points in the intellectual evolution of mankind . . . The traffic was all one way. Moorish Spain was the donor, western Christendom the eager recipient.[38]

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[35] See chapter 1, n. 1.

[36] Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century,* 342, 343. "Looked at more than superficially, the famed contrast is a very complex and ambiguous matter. The spirit of Plato has sometimes been associated with the religious impulse as such; but equally, and in fact more importantly, where the framework of thought is already religious, an expanded Aristotelianism has represented an ordered and stable understanding of the world in relation to God, while Platonism has been taken to represent variously humanism, magic, or individual rational speculation,." Williams "Philosophy," in *The Greek Legacy: A New Appraisal,* ed. Finley, 210.

[37] Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* 70.

[38] Fletcher, *Moorish Spain,* 147, 174. Paulus Orosius adds to this final word from Fletcher by showing that Spain not only flourished intellectually due to Muslim influence but economically as well. He shows how the cities of Spain improved after Muslim ideas and resources arrived in the western Mediterranean ("The Course of Civilization is from East to West," in Reilly, *The Medieval Spains*, 61-67).

6.3 The Twelfth-Century Renaissance

The Renaissance of the twelfth century was a period of many changes during what is sometimes termed the "High Middle Ages" in Western Europe, directly connected to the influx of intellectual wealth from Arabic-Latin translations.[39] It included social, political, and economic transformations, and an intellectual revitalization of Europe with strong philosophical and scientific roots. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Europe, there was a radical increase in the rate of new inventions, innovations in the ways of managing traditional means of production, and economic growth.[40] In less than a century, there were more inventions developed than in the previous thousand years of human history. The period saw major technological advances in many areas of human society, including the widespread use of printing, gunpowder, the astrolabe, spectacles, and reliable clocks. These changes paved the way for later achievements, such as the literary and artistic movement of the Italian Renaissance in the fifteenth century and the scientific developments of the seventeenth century.[41]

Charles H. Haskins was the first historian to write extensively about a "renaissance" that ushered in the High Middle Ages starting about 1100. In 1927, he wrote that:

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[39] J. Jolivet, "The Arabic Inheritance," *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy,* ed. P. Dronke (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 113-47.

[40] See Appendix I.

[41] Robert L. Benson, Constable Giles, and Carol D. Lanham, eds., *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

> . . . [the twelfth century in Europe] was in many respects an age of fresh and vigorous life. The epoch of the Crusades, of the rise of towns, and of the earliest bureaucratic states of the West, it saw the culmination of Romanesque art and the beginnings of Gothic; the emergence of the vernacular literatures; the revival of the Latin classics and of Latin poetry and Roman law; the recovery of Greek science, with its Arabic additions, and of much of Greek philosophy; and the origin of the first European universities. The twelfth century left its signature on higher education, on the scholastic philosophy, on European systems of law, on architecture and sculpture, on the liturgical drama, on Latin and vernacular poetry.[42]

Whether the twelfth century advance in culture and literature can truly be called a "renaissance" has been debated since the work of Haskins in the early twentieth century.[43] The alternative terms of renewal, revival, and "proto-renaissance" are sometimes offered as more precise definitions. Part of the question lies in the definition of renaissance, a word technically meaning "rebirth." Is what happened in the twelfth century a true rebirth of classical thought or a more subdued remembering of ancient ideas? For some scholars, the work of the twelfth century represents a shallow understanding of true Greek form and content, and does not represent an authentic return to Greek roots, which occurred in the next three centuries.[44] "By 1204, the great period of acquisition was coming to an end: the

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[42] Haskins, *The Renaissance of the 12th Century*, vi.

[43] This debate is clearly delineated in C. Warren Hollister, ed., *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1969). In dissent and/or qualification of Hoskins' more energetic view of the 12th century, see Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Arts* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1965), 36, 38-39, 42-43, 82-86, 100-103, 106-113; Hebert J. Muller, *The Uses of the* Past (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), 249-255; and Eva Matthews Sanford, "The Twelfth Century—Renaissance or Proto-Renaissance?" *Speculum* 26 (1951): 635-641.

[44] The so-called "principle of disjunction" sees twelfth century ideas as a borrowing from classical literature but invested with non-classical elements, creating a unique hybrid that is no longer truly classical. See Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Arts,* 38ff for a discussion of this schema.

period of digestion was beginning."[45] Eby and Arrowood go on to state plainly, "The thirteenth [and presumably the twelfth] century scholars used Aristotle, but they were not Hellenists; their culture was essentially Latin. They worked from translations, but few of them understood the Greek language, and none understood the Greek spirit."[46] Yet, the twelfth century was involved in such a resurgence of fresh ideas that calling it a renaissance does justice to its unique character and contribution to Western Europe without detracting from the history-altering renaissance attached to the 15th century.

Haskins notes that the revival of the twelfth century was not the product of a particular court or single dynasty, not the work of one country. Italy, France, England, and even Germany all participated in this upturn in learning, with Spain holding a special role. "Spain's part was to serve as the chief link with the learning of the Mohammedan world; the very names of the translators who worked there illustrate the European character of the new search for learning: John of Seville, Hugh of Santalla, Plato of Tivoli, Gerard of Cremona, Hermann of Carinthia, Rudolf of Bruges, Robert of Chester."[47] It addition to the diversity of cultures represented in this translation/revival activity was also the impression that David Knowles

[45] Hollister, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance,* 143.

[46] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education: Ancient and Medieval*, 717.

[47] Haskins, *The Renaissance of the 12th Century,* 11.

expresses: these scholars were "working solely from a disinterested desire for knowledge."[48]

The flowering of the medieval spirit in Europe took place beginning in the twelfth century, the outgrowth of a process that had started in the seventh century. The common misunderstanding of the Middle Ages as a period of complete stagnation is inaccurate; Europe, while slowed by the conquests of barbarian groups after the fall of Rome, certainly retained a certain dynamism and cannot be simply viewed as a time of intellectual or cultural "darkness." Such a view ignores the development of

> . . . the great medieval institutions of feudalism, ecclesiasticism, and scholasticism . . . [and the] great economic changes within this epoch, the influx of the new learning of the East, the shifting currents in the stream of medieval life and thought. On the intellectual side, in particular, it neglects the medieval revival of Latin classics and of jurisprudence, the extension of knowledge by the absorption of ancient learning and by observation, and the creative work of these centuries in poetry and art.[49]

However, philosophical and scientific teaching of the early Middle Ages was based upon the few copies and commentaries of ancient Greek texts that remained in Western Europe after the collapse of the western Roman Empire. Much of Europe had lost contact with the knowledge of the past. The state of philosophy in pre-twelfth century Europe was bounded by an important shortcoming; "it remained *fragmentary* and, as it were, incidental; it remained eclectic and never rose to the level of

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[48] David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), 185. For example, the Arabic-Latin translators "received little or no remuneration and enjoyed scarcely any fame; there was no other motive for their work than devotion to truth and knowledge," Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages,* 359.

[49] Haskins, *The Renaissance of the 12th Century,* 4.

knowledge with a universal object, for it knew nothing of the all-embracing pretensions of a philosophical system,"[50] which would come into play as Aristotle's works enabled them to build an authentic *Weltanschanuung,* built on both reason and faith. While such notable pre-twelfth century thinkers such as Anselm and Abelard were generating key philosophical works before the period of Arabic-Latin translations of Greek ideas, the availability of Greek literature helped Latin Europe dress its thoughts more carefully.

This scenario changed during the Renaissance of the twelfth century. The increased contact with the Islamic world in Spain and Sicily, the Crusades, the *Reconquista,* and later, increased contact with Byzantium, allowed Europeans to seek and translate the works of Hellenic and Islamic philosophers and scientists, especially the works of Aristotle.[51] The birth of medieval universities allowed Europe to propagate these texts and started a new infrastructure which was needed for scientific communities. By the beginning of the thirteenth century there were reasonably accurate Latin translations of the main works of almost all the intellectually crucial ancient authors from the past, with the exception perhaps of Plato's works, whose basic ideas were reasonably well represented within the Augustinian/Christian tradition.

Some writers on the medieval period have stressed that many of the philosophical treatises used by the Scholastics were actually produced directly from

[50] Van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West,* 36.

[51] H.A.R. Gibb, "The Influence of Islamic Culture on Medieval Europe," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 38 (1955-56): 82-98.

the Greek, and Arabic translations were used only when Greek translations were unavailable.[52] While this is true, it is also misleading. The Arabic-Latin translations predated, in most cases, the Greek-Latin works, since access to Greek manuscripts from Constantinople did not occur until the thirteenth century, after European Crusaders invaded Constantinople. Because Latin and Greek are much more similar in form and syntax than Arabic and Latin, Greek-Latin translations could be made more smoothly, although often more stilted,[53] and thus eventually overtook the Arabic works.[54] But the preeminence of the Arabic translations still remained. As well, the multitude of Arabic commentaries on Greek philosophy gave Western Europe a broad base from which to explore Greek philosophy that Greek texts alone could not accomplish.[55] The advantage of the Arabic Aristotelian works over the

[52] For example Kretzmann, et al., eds., plainly state in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, 52, that "There is a tenacious legend that the West learnt its Aristotle via translations from the Arabic, but the fact is that the West turned to Arabic-Latin translations only in default of the more intelligible Greek-Latin ones. The only translations from the Arabic to achieve wide circulation were the *De caelo, Mateorologica I-III, De animalibus* and *Metaphysics,* and all of these except the *De animalibus* were quickly displaced by William of Moerbeke's versions [whose work started around 1265]," Kretzmann, et al., eds., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, 52.

[53] "Nor was Latin the ideal medium for rendering all the subtleties of the originals [in Greek]. The lack of a definite article made it impossible to deal with many abstract expressions." Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars,* 121. In my own teaching of Greek, an entire unit is spent on the function of the Greek article, a small but mighty syntactical tool of this language.

[54] For example, by the time of Aquinas in the 1200s, a new set of translations of the Aristotelian writings was available, directly from Greek into Latin. "[Aquinas] was the first Christian philosopher who had access to the completed new translation," Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages, 358*. However, this does not in any way minimize the contribution of Arabic commentaries and an overall philosophical energy and intellectual precedent.

[55] As admitted by Kretzmann, et al., eds., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*: "The legend [see n. 52] has more basis, however, when one considers Aristotelian doctrine in a vaguer sense. The twelfth-century translations of Avicenna, Alfarabi, and Algazel, for example, helped to disseminate Aristotelian doctrine . . . and of course the commentaries of Averroes in the thirteenth century [sic, actually the twelfth century] made a powerful impact on the West," 52.

Greek works was also seen in the dynamic tradition of commentary and teaching that remained current and viable through the period of translation.[56] "It is clear, then, that even though Aristotelianism represents an unbroken tradition that stretches across eighteen or nineteen centuries from the philosopher's death . . . the system continues to grow through . . . the contributions of individual thinkers whose own insights flow into the literature of comment and thus into the system itself."[57] As Watt says,

> When one becomes aware of the full extent of . . . Arab thinking and Arab writing, one sees that without the Arabs, European . . . philosophy would not have developed when [it] did. The Arabs were no mere transmitters of Greek thought, but genuine bearers, who both kept alive the disciplines they had been taught and extended their range. When about 1100 Europeans became seriously interested in the . . . philosophy of their Saracen enemies, these disciplines were at their zenith; and the Europeans had to learn all they could from the Arabs before they themselves could make further advances.[58]

Knowles comments that "the manner of its arrival [Greek philosophy via Arabic philosophers], and the vehicles by which it was conveyed, had a great share in determining the quality and the extent of its influence [in Western Europe]."[59] Hollister and Bennett offer a helpful commentary on the relation between Islam and the twelfth-century Latin revival: "Although the monastic schools from which these Europeans came belie the notion of a deeply asleep Europe kissed awake by an

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[56] Burnett, "Arabic into Latin: The Reception of Arabic Philosophy into Western Europe," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy,* ed. Adamson and Taylor, 374-375.

[57] Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs,* 223.

[58] Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* 43. For an overview of the intellectual resources of Islam in the early twelfth century, see A.J. Arberry, *A Twelfth-Century Reading List: A Chapter in Arab Bibliography* (London: Emery Walker, Ltd 1951).

[59] Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought,* 205. See Artz, *The Mind of the Middle Ages,* 260 for support.

Arabian prince, there is no doubt that the intellectual development of medieval Europe was profoundly stimulated by the richness of Islamic libraries and the wisdom of their scholars."[60]

6.31 Scholasticism and the Rise of Universities

In early medieval Europe, all education, other than trade skills, was controlled entirely by the Roman Catholic Church for the express purpose of assisting the clergy in establishing the Christian religion as promoted from Rome, to promote scholarship in service of the worldview of the Catholic hierarchy. The Church's focus on scholarship was intended to assist the promotion of the Christian faith, not to increase knowledge *per se*. So, the scholarship of medieval Europe prior to the twelfth century consisted primarily of a study of religion, and the natural sciences were confined to a search for the moral qualities in man and nature. The common beginning point for a change in Europe's intellectual environment typically is assigned to the twelfth century and the advent of scholasticism.

Scholasticism finds its roots in the Latin word *scholasticus* (Greek: σχολαστικός), which means "that which belongs to the school," and was a method of learning advocated by the academics (or schoolmen) of Western, Latin medieval universities circa 1100–1500. Although the essential techniques of Scholasticism, and indeed the willingness to use critical thinking tools, predates the arrival of Arabic-

[60] Hollister and Bennett, *Medieval Europe: A Short History,* 100.

Latin texts,[61] Scholasticism soon found purpose in an attempt to reconcile the philosophy of the ancient classical philosophers with medieval Christian theology, as Greek ideas began to flow into Europe from Islamic Spain. It was not a philosophy or theology in itself, but a tool and method for learning which put emphasis on dialectical reasoning.[62] The primary purpose of scholasticism was to find the answer to a question or to resolve a contradiction. Scholastic philosophy usually combined logic, metaphysics, and semantics into a single discipline. In order to continue our historical analysis, it is important to briefly describe the scholastic educational environment of Western Europe during the Middle Ages in order to show how Greek ideas moved from isolated translations in the hands of individuals to a connected forum of thought within the Western intellectual society.

> Learning was no longer confined to monasteries and monastic schools, but a new guild of professional intellectuals was created, which developed new intellectual aspirations. Such men were no longer satisfied with the traditional concept of Christian wisdom but wanted to pursue the whole domain of human learning, and they resolutely set out to recover and develop the intellectual heritage of antiquity.[63]

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[61] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition,* 273.

[62] "No method in philosophy has been more unjustly condemned than that of the Scholastics. No philosophy has been more grossly misrepresented. And this is true not only of the details, but also of the most essential elements of Scholasticism. Two charges, especially, are made against the Schoolmen: First, that they confounded philosophy with theology; and second, that they made reason subservient to authority. As a matter of fact, the very essence of Scholasticism is, first, its clear delimitation of the respective domains of philosophy and theology, and, second, its advocacy of the use of reason," William Turner, "Scholasticism," New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia <http://www.new advent.org/cathen/13548a.htm>, accessed September 8, 2007.

[63] Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinbory, eds., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100-1600* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 14.

The scholastics would choose a book by a renowned scholar as a subject of investigation.[64] By reading the book thoroughly and critically, the readers learned to appreciate the ideas of the treatise. Then other documents related to the original document would be referenced, both ancient and contemporary. The points of disagreement and contention between these multiple sources would be written down, looking at it from all sides, hopefully with an open mind.[65]

Once the sources and points of disagreement had been outlined, there would be a dialectical attempt to make the two sides of an argument agree.[66] This was done in two ways. First, through philological analysis, words were examined to see if they could have more than one meaning, or if an author could have intended a word to mean something else. Ambiguity in language could be used to find common ground between two otherwise contradictory statements. Second, through logical analysis which relied on the rules of formal logic, contradictions could be eliminated.

Scholastics developed two different genres of literature. The first was called "questions" which posed a question and was followed by a number of quotes, either in support or disagreement of the question. The second was called a *summa*. A summa was a system of related questions on a particular subject, producing a summary of ideas within a particular subject area. The famous summa of Thomas

[64] Aristotle ("The Philosopher") and commentaries by Averroes ("The Commentator"), as well as Plato (specifically, *Timaeus*) were common starting points of discussion for the scholastics as Latin translations became available.

[65] See Josef Pieper, *Scholasticism: Personalities and Problems of Medieval Philosophy* 2nd rev. ed., trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Chicago: St. Augustine's Press, 2001).

[66] Maurice DeWulf, *An Introduction to Scholastic Philosophy: Medieval and Modern: Scholasticism Old and New,* trans. P. Coffey (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003).

Aquinas was called *Summa Theologica;* its stated goal was to cover the "sum" of Christian theology at the time.

Scholastic schools used two methods of teaching.[67] The first was called the *lectio*. A teacher would read a text, discussing certain words or ideas; but no questions were allowed. It was a simple reading of a text with an explanation from the master teacher. The second was called the *disputatio,* which was at the center of the scholastic method and where discussion was allowed and required. There were two types of *disputatios*. The first was called the "ordinary," where the question to be disputed was announced beforehand. The second was the *quodlibetal* in which the students would give the question to the teacher without prior preparation. The teacher in both cases would respond, citing authoritative texts to support and prove his position. Students would then give rebuttals in response. Someone would keep notes on what was said during this exercise. The teacher would then summarize the arguments from these notes and present his final position the next day.

Scholasticism overlapped movements in Islamic philosophy (for example, the work of Averroes) and Jewish philosophy (especially Maimonides). From the eighth century, the Mutazilite school of Islam, defending their ideas against the orthodox Islamic authorities of their day, used philosophy in support, and were one of the first to develop a rationalistic theology, as we discussed in the last chapter, called Ilm-al-Kalam. This can be seen as a form of scholastic theology.

[67] Kretzmann, et al, eds., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, 25f.

Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) is sometimes called the "Father of Scholasticism" because of the prominent role reason played in his theology. Anselm of Laon (d. 1117), Peter Abelard (1079-1142), and Peter Lombard (1100-1160) are all also part of the early Scholastic tradition. By the time we reach the thirteenth century, we see the attempted suppression of various groups perceived as heterodox, and the associated rise of orthodox orders (notably the Franciscans and Dominicans). Those two orders quickly became contexts for some of the most intense scholastic debates, producing such theologians as Alexander of Hales (Franciscan) and Thomas Aquinas (Dominican). Scholastic theology continued to develop into the fourteenth century, becoming ever more complex and subtle in its distinctions and arguments. The fourteenth century saw in particular the rise to dominance of the nominalist theologies of men like William of Ockham, which in many ways opened the door for the breakdown of the Thomistic synthesis and for the later "science versus theology" battles.[68]

Latin Scholasticism was undoubtedly the offspring of the resurgence of Aristotelianism in Europe. Arabic thought and translation helped create an environment where rational inquiry was acceptable and accessible, and provided the kinds of philosophical models and tools with which to do this work. This is a critical point of recognition in the progress of Western philosophical thought. The receptivity of Arabic sources of intellectual inquiry in Europe must be seen not only as a direct product of an increase in Greek-based philosophical manuscripts in the Latin

[68] See Knowles, Chapter XXVI, "The Breakdown of the Synthesis," *The Evolution of Medieval Thought,* 311-317.

language but as an indirect change in the entire scholastic environment, one in which a prior emphasis by Arabic scholars, using rationalistic models of thinking, encouraged and modeled for Europeans a new way of investigating questions of metaphysics and epistemology. The Arab writers opened the door for Latin Christians to see fresh ways of using philosophical tools, still within the context of theological prioritization.

The Christian translator, Adelard of Bath, provides a clear example of the shift in European sensibilities with the addition of Arabic derived texts. What he acquired from the Arabs was a rationalist's mentality, what might be later called "secular thinking," although this generation still worked within theological constructs. He developed a feel for observation and experiment. In a letter to his nephew, he wrote these telling words:

> It is a little difficult for you and me to argue . . . I, with reason for my guide, have learned one thing from my Arab teachers, you, something different; dazzled by the outward show of authority you wear a head-stall [a halter]. For what else should we call authority but a head-stall? Just as brute animals are led by the head-stall where one pleases, without seeing why or where they are being led, and only follow the halter by which they are held, so many of you, bound and fettered as you are by a low credulity, are led into danger by the authority of writers. Hence, certain people arrogating to themselves the title of authorities have employed an unbounded license in writing, and this to such an extent that they have not hesitated to insinuate into men of low intellect the false instead of the true. Why should you not fill sheets of paper, aye, fill them on both sides, when today you can get readers who require no proof of sound judgment from you, and are satisfied merely with the name of a time-worn title? They do not understand that reason has been given to individuals that, with it as chief judge, distinction may be drawn between the true and the false. Unless reason were appointed to be the chief judge, to no purpose would she have been given to us individually: it would have been enough for the writing of laws to have been entrusted to one, or at most to a few, and the rest would have been satisfied with their ordinances and authority. Further, the very people who are called authorities first gained the confidence of their inferiors

> only because they followed reason; and those who are ignorant of reason, or neglect it, justly desire to be called blind. However, I will not pursue this subject any further, though I regard authority as matter for contempt. This one thing, however, I will say. We must first search after reason, and when it has been found, and not until then, authority if added to it, may be received. Authority by itself can inspire no confidence in the philosopher, nor ought it to be used for such a purpose. Hence logicians have agreed in treating the argument from authority not as necessary, but probable only. If, therefore, you want to bear anything from me, you must both give and take reason.[69]

The creation of the first European medieval universities generally coincides with the Scholastic period and provided a common setting in which philosophical discussions could take place.[70] These universities evolved from much older schools and monasteries, and it is sometimes difficult to define the date at which they became true universities.[71] Before the twelfth century, the intellectual life of Western Europe had been relegated to monasteries, which were primarily concerned with the study of liturgy and prayer; few monasteries could claim true intellectuals. Following the Gregorian Reform's emphasis on canon law and the study of the sacraments (1050-1080, based on the authority of Pope Gregory VII), bishops formed cathedral schools in key European cities to train the clergy in canon law, but also in the more secular aspects of church administration, including logic useful in preaching and theological discussion, and accounting in order to more effectively oversee finances. Learning

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[69] Adelard of Bath: "The Impact of Muslim Science; Preface to His Very Difficult Natural Questions," Medieval Sourcebook, Paul Halsall, March 1996, Fordham University, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/adelardbath1.html>, accessed September 8, 2007.

[70] The foundational work on this subject is found in Hastings Rashdall's, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages,* 3 vols., revised. by F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

[71] In the East, the university of Constantinople was founded as early as the ninth century as a secular institute of higher learning, to support the state administration.

became essential for the advancement of the clergy hierarchy, with the result that master teachers gained prestige. However, demand quickly outpaced the capacity of cathedral schools, each of which was essentially run by one teacher. Cathedral schools began to migrate to large cities, like Paris and Bologna, to increase needed resources and to attract larger numbers of students.[72]

The predecessor of the modern university found its roots most notably in Paris,[73] especially under the guidance of Peter Abelard, which made it a priority to collect texts for university study. Abelard and others formed the *Universitas,* modeled after the medieval guild system. Initially, medieval universities did not have a formal campus; classes were taught where space was available, such as in homes and churches. A university was not defined as a physical space but as a collection of individuals united as a *universitas* (a corporation). Soon, however, some universities (such as Cambridge) began to buy or rent rooms specifically for the purposes of instruction. Universities were generally structured along three types, depending on who paid the teachers. The first type was in Bologna, where students hired and paid for the teachers. The second type was in Paris, where teachers were paid by the

[72] John W. Baldwin, *The Scholastic Culture of the Middle Ages: 1000-1300* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1971), 35-57.

[73] See Stephen Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University: The Schools of Paris and their Critics, 1100-1215* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). For a brief overview of the faculty and curriculum of the Paris school in the thirteenth century, see Van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West,* 162-197.

Church. The third type, examples of which include Cambridge and Oxford, were predominantly supported by the state.[74]

The following list contains the names of Western European universities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries:[75]

- University of Bologna, Italy: teaching from 10th century, recognized as a University in 1088
- University of Paris, France: 1150
- University of Oxford, England: teaching from 1096, recognized as a University in 1167
- University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy: 1175
- University of Vicenza, Italy: 1204
- University of Cambridge, England: teaching from the 12th century, recognized as a University in 1209
- University of Palencia, Spain: 1212
- University of Arezzo, Italy: 1215
- University of Salamanca, Spain: 1218
- University of Padua, Italy: 1222
- University of Naples, Federico II, Italy: 1224
- University of Toulouse, France: 1229

[74] Robert S. Rait, *Life in the Medieval University* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1931).

[75] From Charles Homer Haskins, *The Rise of Universities* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972).

- University of Siena, Italy: 1240
- University of Piacenza, Italy: 1248
- University of Valladolid, Spain: 1250
- University of Seville, Spain: 1254
- University of Northampton, England: 1261
- University of Montpellier, France: 1289
- University of Coimbra, Portugal: 1290
- University of Macerata, Italy: 1290
- University of Lisbon, Portugal: 1290
- University of Lleida, Spain: 1300

6.32 Averroism

As these translations, derived from the Greeks, found their way into European universities, they caused an intellectual stir as the grand philosophical system of Aristotle engaged Latin Christian minds. "The effect of this new material was immediate and electric. Shortly after A.D. 1200 the influence of [Arab philosophers] began manifesting itself in the Arts Faculty of Oxford and Paris."[76] The Biblotheque Nationale in Paris holds a manuscript, dated to 1243, that contains almost the complete body of work created by Averroes, which shows that the impact of Averroes was complete by about 1240.[77] The work of Averroes on Aristotle, "the man in whom

[76] Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs,* 222.

[77] Van Steenberghen, *Aristotle in the West,* 92.

truth was consummated,"[78] caused European scholars to take both pro and con views of "The Commentator's" ideas: the pro-Averroists, known as Latin Averroists, with Siger of Brabant at their head, and the anti-Averroists, with Thomas Aquinas, a fellow Dominican with Siger, at their head. The issues that divided these two groups were significant, ranging from unity of the intellect, to the question of the eternity of the world, to the reality of divine providence. Islam and Christianity both encountered a three-fold dilemma in regard to using Aristotle's ideas. First, Aristotle posits a mechanistic view of God who is simply the "prime mover," while Islam and Christianity see God in a theistic way, both providential and actively participating in human history. Second, Aristotle assumes the eternity of matter while Islam and Christianity believe in a creation of the world *ex nihilo*. Third, Aristotle argued against the immortality of the individual soul in contrast to Islam and Christianity. "The Moslem . . . thinkers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, like their Christian successors in the thirteenth and fourteenth, had the choice of rejecting Aristotelianism in its entirety, of separating the world of science from the world of faith, or of trying to prove the ultimate compatibility of reason and revelation."[79]

Importantly, even the critics of Averroes and his brand of Aristotelianism,—Aquinas included—could not escape the influence of the great Arabic thinker. "Their understanding of Aristotle (again including Aquinas) was conditioned by Averroes'

[78] Credited to Averroes by Fakhry, *Averroes, Aquinas and the Rediscovery of Aristotle in Western Europe,* 4.

[79] Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages,* 361.

interpretation.[80] Eby and Arrowood concur; "It is of particular interest that Moslem scholars contributed to the development of Christian thought by furnishing opposition to Christian theologians . . . In later centuries, the scholastic theologians of the Roman Catholic Church elaborated their own system in refuting the doctrines of Islam."[81] As I stated in chapter 1, this kind of understanding of the dependence of Aquinas on Averroes prompted Renan to conclude that Aquinas owed "almost everything" to Averroes.[82] While the statement of Renan is obviously an exaggeration, the place of Averroes and Aristotle in the mind and work of Aquinas can hardly be underestimated. Aquinas, however, did move beyond both Averroes and Aristotle as we examine the unique direction of his synthetic system, building a "remarkable extension and transfiguration of the peripatetic philosophy, so much so that it becomes a philosophy in its own right, transcending its historical sources."[83] Such an admission of creativity on the part of Aquinas does nothing to dispel the foundational

[80] Ibid., 5. "For about one hundred and fifty years, the books of the Arab philosophers were studied in Christian Europe without prejudice to the reader's orthodoxy, and though scholars like Albert the Great or Thomas Aquinas might be harsh in their judgments on Islam, they approached a text of Ibn Sina or Ibn Rushd with a quite different frame of mind," Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs,* 222.

[81] Eby and Arrowood, *History and Philosophy of Education,* 698. "The phenomenon of cultural interaction that leads to some kind of assimilation is bound to lead, in the same instance, to a demarcation, an identification, and an elaboration of the ways in which the cultures do differ and of the instances in which assimilation does not take place. What this means, however, is that in providing a vivid sense of a different culture, the Arab cultural presence in Europe in many instances played the critical formative role of an identity against which many other Europeans might define themselves. Thus, when we study a writer such as Dante, for example, it is incumbent upon us not to ignore the role of Arabic culture, because it was influenced not in the sense that he embraced it but in the sense that his work may have been a considered reaction against its encroaching presence in his intellectual milieu," Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History,* 52.

[82] See page 45; Renan, *Averroès et l'Averroïsme*, cited by Fakhry, Ibid, 5.

[83] Van Steenberghen, *Aristotle and the West,* 186.

role of Averroes in the thought of Aquinas. It simply reminds us of the dynamic give and take that must accompany philosophic inquiry in every generation.

Etienne Gilson gives Averroes the distinction of having established the "primacy of reasons" or a purely philosophical rationalism long before the official beginning of the Renaissance. He writes that rationalism was "born in Spain, in the mind of an Arabian philosopher, as a conscious reaction against the theologism of the Arabian divines."[84] Gilson goes on to add that Averroes "bequeathed to his successors the ideal of a purely rational philosophy, an ideal whose influence was to be such that, by it, even the evolution of Christian philosophy was to be deeply modified."[85] Specifically, Gilson grants to Averroes the same recognition that would become such a pivotal part of Aquinas' own work: "That nothing should enter the texture of metaphysical knowledge save only rational and necessary demonstration. For the same reason, he [Aquinas] even agreed with Averroes that the so-called necessary reasons of so many theologians were merely dialectical probabilities."[86]

Averroism is the term applied to either of two philosophical trends among scholastics in the late thirteenth century. The main ideas of the earlier philosophical concept of Averroism, found in Averroes' commentaries to Aristotle, were:

- there is one truth, but there are two ways to reach it: through philosophy and through religion;

[84] Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages,* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), 37.

[85] Ibid., 38.

[86] Ibid., 79.

- the world is eternal;
- the soul is divided into two parts: one individual, and one divine;
- the individual soul is not eternal;
- all humans at the basic level share one and the same divine soul (an idea known as monopsychism);
- resurrection of the dead is not possible.

This stance was condemned, in 1270 and 1277, by the Roman Catholic bishop Etienne Tempier. Tempier went on to specify 219 other unacceptable Averroist theses. To resolve the problem, Siger and Boetius of Dacia claimed that there existed a "double truth": a factual or "hard" truth that is reached through science and philosophy, and a "religious" truth that is reached through religion, and the two could lead to different conclusions.[87]

The later philosophical concept of Averroism was the idea that the philosophical and religious worlds are separate entities. However, upon analyzing the 219 theses condemned by Tempier, it was obvious that not many of them originated in Averroes. Radical Aristotelianism and heterodox Aristotelianism were the terms commonly used for a while to refer to the actual philosophical movement started by Siger and to differentiate it from Averroism. The idea of the separation of philosophy and religion found in Averroism was influential in the development of modern secularism.

[87] This idea had not originated in Averroes; his idea was that there was one truth reached in different ways, not two truths. Had Averroes never existed would Siger and the Latin Averroists have come to their same conclusions by reading Aristotle alone? The jury is still out. See Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought,* 277.

In spite of, or perhaps partly because of, the journey of Averroism in Western Europe, the impact of the Arabic philosopher remained great within the Latin intellectual tradition.[88]

> Apart from the translations of the works of Abu Mashar, al-Kindi, al-Farabi and Avicenna, it was the translations of the great commentaries of Averroes on the whole Aristotelian Corpus, with the exception of the *Politics,* that brought about a genuine intellectual revolution in West European learned circles and led to the rise of that great philosophical-theological movement, known as Latin Scholasticism, in the thirteenth century.[89]

In support of this strong claim, we have the contemporaneous testimony of the British philosopher Roger Bacon (d.1294), who spent most of his adult life at the universities of Oxford and Paris. He wrote in the *Opus Majus,* commenting on the Arabic contributions to the revival of Greek thought in Western Europe: "But the larger portion of the philosophy of Aristotle received little attention, either on account of the concealment of the copies of his works and their difficulty or unpopularity or on account of the wars in the East, till after the time of Mohamet [Mohammed] when Avicenna and Averroes and others recalled to the light of full exposition the philosophy of Aristotle."[90] Myers states, ". . . ibn Rushd came to be regarded as the arch-infidel and the greatest enemy of the Christian faith. Aquinas' immense efforts against him were indicative of the general reaction against Averroism.

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[88] Carmela Baffioni, ed., *Averroes and the Aristotelian Heritage* (Naples: Guida Editori, 2004).

[89] Fakhry, *Averroes, Aquinas and the Rediscovery of Aristotle in Western Europe,* 3.

[90] Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus,* trans. Robert Belle Burke (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1928), 63.

Notwithstanding the Church's opposition, Averroes' writings remained alive in Europe until the sixteenth century."[91]

6.4 Aquinas

I am now at the point in this dissertation where I can connect the philosophical/educational points of historical continuity that typically arise in philosophy of education textbooks, as outlined previously in chapter one. Typically, philosophy of education textbooks move from the classical Greek philosophers immediately to the Middle Ages, commonly directly to Aquinas.[92] As my study has shown, this historical jump of about 1600 years ignores the rich and varied history of philosophy that pertains to the intermediate period; it does no justice to the course of Western thought around the dual roadblocks of post-Rome Europe and Byzantium nor through the auspices of Arabic thinkers and the Islamic Empire. Aquinas completes the philosophical circuit in that his work was closely influenced by that of Averroes, as both a protagonist and antagonist,[93] but without doubt adopting the method of commentary modeled by Averroes. "St. Thomas Aquinas, whose

[91] Myers, *Arabic Thought and the Western World,* 48.

[92] For example, see Dunn, *Philosophical Foundations of Education,* 75.

[93] Averroes became the chief opponent of Aquinas, whom he had to combat in order to defend and make known the "true" Aristotle. Averroes was commonly described as "The Commentator," but Aquinas often saw him not so much a "Peripatetic" but as a "corruptor of the Peripatetics." Aquinas resolved to take what was true from the "unjust possessors." Objections by the Church to Aristotle would cease if the true Aristotle were made known. Aristotle was to be purified; false commentators were to be refuted. And the most influential of those was Averroes. On the other hand, "Aquinas, as is well known, used the translations of several of the commentaries . . . Thus when Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle became the official one for many Christian philosophers—and theologians—the commentaries he had used influenced the tradition indirectly through his work," Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity*, 174.

achievement it was to show that reason and revelation could coexist in a Christian philosophy, explicitly cited Averroes no less than 503 times in the course of his work"[94] And as Watt notes, "The whole range of . . . European philosophy was deeply indebted to the Arabic writers; and Thomas Aquinas owed just as much to the Aristotelianism of Averroes as did Siger of Brabant [the Latin Averroist and philosophical opponent of Aquinas]."[95] Not only did Aquinas lean on the work of Averroes, but the careful investigator can find influences from other Arabic scholars in Aquinas' work as well. For example, the arguments for the existence of God built by al-Farabi are remarkable similar to Aquinas' own proofs; al-Farabi's work on the attributes of God are also obviously seen in Aquinas' list and description of divine characteristics.[96]

Thus, my work is near completion as I move my focus back into the typical timeline often used in discussing Western intellectual tradition and connect with the work of Aquinas.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) lived at a critical juncture of Western culture when the arrival of the Aristotelian corpus in Latin translation reopened the question of the age-old issue of the relationship between faith and reason. This crisis flared up just as universities were coming into prominence. Aquinas, after early studies at the Italian monastery of Monte Cassino, moved on to the University of Naples, where he

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[94] Fletcher, *Moorish Spain,* 134.

[95] Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* 71.

[96] Myers, *Arabic Thought and the Western World,* 17-30, based on the work of Robert Hammond, *The Philosophy of Al Farabi and its Influence on Medieval Thought* (Cynthiana, KY: The Hobson Book Press, 1947).

met members of the new Dominican Order. It was at Naples too that Aquinas had his first extended contact with the new learning. When he joined the Dominican Order he went to study with Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great), author of a paraphrase of the Aristotelian corpus. Aquinas completed his studies at the University of Paris. In two stints as a regent master, Aquinas agued against both the Averroistic interpretations of Aristotle as well as the Franciscan tendency to reject Greek philosophy. The result was a new way, at least for Latin Europe, to connect faith and philosophy. Over time, Aquinas' theological writings became normative in the Catholic Church and his textual commentaries on Aristotle represent an ongoing cultural resource.[97] The philosophy of Aquinas exerted enormous influence on subsequent Christian theology, especially that of the Roman Catholic Church, extending to Western philosophy in general, where he stands as a vehicle and modifier of Aristotelianism. Philosophically, his most important and enduring work is the *Summa Theologica,* in which he expounds his systematic theology.[98]

From the beginning of his writing career, Aquinas produced writings which would not have emerged from the usual tasks of a mere theological master.[99] *On Being and Essence* and *The Principles of Nature* date from his first stay at Paris, and unlike his commentaries on Boethius' *On the Trinity* and *De hebdomadibus,* are quite

[97] Based on Ralph McInerny and John O'Callaghan, "Saint Thomas Aquinas," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2005 Edition), Edward N. Zalta, ed., <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2005/entries/aquinas/>, accessed September 8, 2007.

[98] Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[99] Christopher Martin, *The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas: Introductory Readings* (London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1988).

obviously philosophical works. When he returned to Italy, his productivity increased. He finished the *Summa Contra Gentiles,* wrote various disputed questions, and began the *Summa Theologica.*[100] In 1268, at Rome, he began the work of commenting on Aristotle with *On the Soul,* and during the next five or six years commented on eleven more Aristotelian treatises. During this time he also wrote such polemical works as *On the Eternity of the World* and *On There Being Only One Intellect.*

At the time of his death in 1274, Aquinas was under a cloud of suspicion in Paris and in 1277, 219 Aristotelian/Averroism propositions were condemned by a commission appointed by the Bishop of Paris, among them 16 tenets of Aquinas himself. This was soon lifted; he was canonized and eventually was given the title of Doctor of the Church.[101] "The extraordinary impact Aquinas had on Western thought lay especially in his conviction that the judicious exercise of man's empirical and rational intelligence, which had been developed and empowered by the Greeks, could now marvelously serve the Christian cause."[102]

Aquinas' creative joining of faith and reason, the "medieval synthesis" as it is sometimes called, is an important capstone in our present conversation, as it brings the question of "how theology and philosophy can support one another" to the

[100] Believing that Augustine had not accepted Plato in full but had carefully amended his ideas whenever necessary to make them compatible with Christian faith, Aquinas determined that he would do the same with Aristotle. His *Summa Theologica* presents his "Christianized" form of Aristotelianism, meant to combat not just neo-Platonism but also secular Aristotelianism. See Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh, eds., *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1974), 540.

[101] Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1990).

[102] Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind,* 188.

forefront, a question that earlier Christianity struggled to address fully or appropriately.[103] In order to accomplish this linkage, as a philosopher, Aquinas is dependent on Aristotle, although not ignorant of other patterns of thought including the Platonic tradition that had moved behind the scenes in the Latin Church.[104] The recognition that Aquinas is fundamentally an Aristotelian does not mean that Aristotle is the only influence on him. It does mean, however, that whatever Aquinas takes from other sources is held to be compatible with what he already holds in common with Aristotle. And, of course, to draw attention to the sources of Aquinas' philosophy is not to say that everything he holds philosophically can be traced directly back to historical antecedents.

Other early Christian thinkers, such as Augustine, argued that philosophical reflection complemented theology, but only when these philosophical reflections were firmly grounded in a prior intellectual commitment to the underlying truth of the Christian faith. Thus, the legitimacy of philosophy was derived from the legitimacy of the underlying faith commitments. Augustine's view was obviously hierarchical, with philosophy a servant to theology. Into the later Middle Ages, Augustine's views were widely known and defended. It was during this time however that Aquinas described

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[103] Robert O. Pasnau and Christopher John Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003).

[104] "Indeed one could argue that in spite of his acceptance of Neoplatonic elements in the tradition it was Aquinas' use of Averroes' long commentary on the *De anima,* translated into Latin by Michael Scotus, probably in Sicily somewhere between 1228 and 1240, that redressed the balance against western Platonizing tendencies that were to be encouraged by the arrival of Latin translations of the works of Greek Neoplantonists," Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity*, 173. In support, see Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West* (London: The Warburg Institute, 2000). On Aquinas' understanding of Platonic thought itself see, Wayne J. Hankey, "Aquinas and the Platonists," in *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages: A Doxographic Approach*, ed. Gersh and Hoenen, 279-324.

another model for the relationship between philosophy and theology, distinct from Augustine's ideas. According to the Thomistic model, philosophy and theology are actually separate enterprises, heading from different directions toward the same goal. Both were, contrary to Augustine, completely part of God's truth. The primary difference between the two is their intellectual starting points. Philosophy takes its data from the input of our natural mental faculties: what we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell. This information can be accepted as true on the basis of the reliability of our natural faculties with respect to the natural world. Theology, on the other hand, takes as its starting point the divine revelations contained in the Bible. This information can be accepted on the basis of divine authority.

In this way of seeing the two disciplines, if at least one of the premises of an argument is derived from revelation, the argument falls into the domain of theology; otherwise it falls into the domain of philosophy. Since God created a world which is accessible to philosophy as well as revealed through the texts accessible to theologians, the claims derived by one cannot conflict with the conclusions yielded by another unless a previous error has been made. Since the conclusions of the two disciplines must coincide, philosophy can be put to the service of theology (and perhaps vice-versa). Theology might hold preeminence over philosophy but the two were never in contradiction.

Faith and reason, while distinct from each other but related in purpose, are the two fundamental tools for understanding the breadth of theology. Aquinas saw that both were necessary, or, at least, that the intersection of both was necessary, for a

person to obtain true knowledge. Aquinas blended Greek philosophy and Christian doctrine by positing that rational thinking and the study of nature, just like revelation, were valid ways to understand God. According to Aquinas, God reveals himself through nature; to study nature is to study God. The ultimate goals of theology, in Aquinas' mind, are to use reason to grasp the truth about God and to experience salvation through that truth. "Attempts were made to ban the study of Aristotle's works at the University of Paris in the first half of the thirteenth century. Intemperate academic struggles occurred until Aquinas showed in his *Summa Theologica* that reason and revelation were compatible, and could come together as in the taut harmony of a Gothic archway."[105] Even though Aquinas' union of faith and reason were largely undone by the later nominalists and empiricists, the place of Greek thought was firmly established in European thought patterns due to the immense influence of Aquinas within the constructs of Scholasticism.

Williams says of the relationship between Aquinas and Aristotle and the resulting impact on Europe,

> . . . what is certainly the most evident and concentratedly important influence of Greek philosophy on subsequent thought, the influence of Aristotle on the thought of the Middle Ages. Aristotle, who was for Thomas Aquinas "The Philosopher," for Dante *il maestro di color che sanno, "*the master of those who know," did much to form, through his various and diverse interpreters, the philosophical, scientific, and cosmological outlook of an entire culture.[106]

[105] Fletcher, *Moorish Spain,* 153.

[106] Williams, "Philosophy," *The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal,* ed. Finley, 203.

In the altarpiece done by Traini for the Church of Saint Caterina at Pisa (1345), Aquinas is shown seated with an open book, his own works.[107] Above him is Christ, Moses, Paul, and the four Gospel writers. On either side of Aquinas, and slightly lower, stand Plato and Aristotle, with their books open for him to read. Directly below Aquinas sits Averroes. The message of this artwork clearly shows that the great doctor of the Church, Aquinas, while subservient to Christ and saints of church history, is influenced by the great Greek philosophers of ages past. That Averroes, the Muslim, is placed in a secondary, humble position is appropriate for this Christian painting; that he is pictured at all indicates to what extent this Arab philosopher was part of the greater discussion of faith and reason.

Aquinas' thought was summed up by Leo XIII in the Encyclical "Aeterni Patris" (1879):

> He won this title of distinction for himself: that single-handed he victoriously combated the errors of former times, and supplied invincible arms to put to rout those which might in after times spring up. Again, clearly distinguishing, as is fitting, reason and faith, he both preserved and had regard for the rights of each; so much so, indeed, that reason, borne on the wings of Thomas, can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already obtained through Thomas.[108]

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[107] John T. Paolettii and Gary M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy,* 3rd ed. (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2005), 158.

[108] His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy, August 4, 1879, "Aeterni Patris," New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, <http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_le13ae.htm>, accessed September 10, 2007. In an ironic twist of philosophical history, in 1968, the influential American neo-Calvinist theologian and cultural historian, Francis Schaeffer, published a small book, *Escape from Reason*. The origin of this disastrous modern "escape" is located by him in the division between nature and grace made by Aquinas, and in his placing of grace above nature. By this account, Aquinas draws a horizontal line and places grace above it and nature below. This hierarchical division is what Schaeffer calls "the real birth of the humanistic Renaissance," and of the autonomy of the human intellect. The reader is told that: "from the basis of this autonomous principle, philosophy also became free, and was separated from revelation." Establishing the reality and goodness of the natural was a good thing, but by doing it as he did, "Aquinas had opened the way to an autonomous humanism, an autonomous philosophy, and once the movement gained momentum, there

6.5 Renaissance

I will be content to make one further historical connection post-Aquinas in our journey of Western philosophical/educational foundations. From Aquinas and the twelfth-century renaissance, it is a relatively easy jump to the fourteenth-sixteenth century Italian Renaissance; from there the path into modern thought is direct and well-established.[109] That the Italian Renaissance represents the advent of the modern period of Western thinking is clearly acknowledged, but what I have attempted to establish is that there is a line of continuity that flows back in history to, and even beyond, the early Greeks. Within modern Western thought, the place and priority of Plato and Aristotle have been firmly established;[110] my goal has been to show how this Greek presence came to be.

I agree strongly with the presuppositions of (but not always the conclusions of) the so-called "continuity thesis" which proposes that there was no radical

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was soon a flood." This was a bad thing. Schaeffer declares that "any autonomy is wrong" in respect to Christ and the Scriptures. Humans, created in the image of God to whom all belongs, demand by nature a rational whole. Once the division Aquinas made was made, step by step the autonomous rational ate up what is above the line rendering it either empty or irrational. The final result is what Schaefer calls the Line of Despair and he tries to show, by way of a dialectical summersault, how traveling down that line we arrive at the loss of confidence in reason: the escape from reason. Francis Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason* (London: InterVarsity Press, 1968), 9-13, 29, 84.

[109] See, for example, the excellent chapter by Cantor, "Late Medieval and Renaissance Culture," *The Civilization of the Middle Ages,* 529-566.

[110] While it may seem as if Aristotle, and not Plato, was the single stream of Greek thought bequeathed to the Renaissance, we must remember the interdependence of Aristotle and Plato. "Many of them [Renaissance Aristotelians] . . . did share two assumptions common to late Neoplatonists . . . namely that the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle were fundamentally at one and that, at the same time, Aristotle's works represented a propaedeutic and preliminary study to that of Plato himself," Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity*, 175. We must be reminded also that "a new series of translations of many of the commentaries [of Plato] was produced in the sixteenth century, some by Greeks who had moved to the West after the fall of Constantinople and who taught at Universities in Northern Italy," Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity*, 175.

discontinuity between the intellectual development of the High Middle Ages, and the developments in the Renaissance and early modern period. Continuity theorists argue, and I concur, that the real intellectual revolution came earlier, both in the twelfth century, with Averroes' revival of Aristotle and its embrace by the Latin West, and earlier at the turn of the millennium within the Islamic civilization.[111]

The idea of a continuity, rather than contrast, between medieval and modern thought begins with the work of Pierre Duhem, the French physicist and philosopher/historian of science. He ideas ares set out in his ten-volume work on the history of science, *Le système du monde: histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic*. Unlike many former historians such as Voltaire and Condorcet, who did not consider the Middle Ages to offer much of intellectual importance, he tried to show that the Roman Catholic Church actually had helped foster the development of Western science and that there was an uninterrupted series of small improvements from doctrines professed in the heart of the medieval schools, in spite of strong difference in opinion about how such rationalistic progress should be made.[112]

Robert Briffault also criticized the idea of a Renaissance taking place in the fifteenth century. He instead argued, perhaps too enthusiastically, that a real Renaissance took place centuries earlier in the Islamic civilization.

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[111] See S.D. Goitein, "Between Hellenism and Renaissance—Islam, the Intermediate Civilization," *Islamic Studies* 2 (1963): 217-233.

[112] For example, the ongoing debates between the Realists (Anslem), Moderate Realists (Abelard, Aquinas), and the Nominalists (Ockham, Bacon).

> It was under the influence of the Arabian and Moorish revival of culture, and not in the fifteenth century, that the real Renaissance took place. Spain, not Italy, was the cradle of the rebirth of Europe. After steadily sinking lower and lower into barbarism, it had reached the darkest depths of ignorance and degradation when the cities of the Saracenic world, Baghdad, Cairo, Córdoba, Toledo, were growing centres of civilization and intellectual activity. It was there that the new life arose which was to grow into a new phase of human evolution. From the time when the influence of their culture made itself felt, began the stirring of a new life . . . The fact has been set forth again and again. But it has been nevertheless stubbornly ignored and persistently minimized. The debt of Europe to the "heathen dog" could, of course, find no place in the scheme of Christian history, and the garbled falsification has imposed itself on all subsequent conceptions . . . It is highly probable that but for the Arabs, modern European civilization would never have arisen at all; it is absolutely certain that but for them, it would not have assumed that character which has enabled it to transcend all previous phases of evolution.[113]

More recently the Australian mathematician and historian of science, James Franklin, has argued that the idea of a European Renaissance is a myth.[114] He characterizes this myth as the view that around the fifteenth century there was in Europe a "sudden dawning" of a new outlook on the world after a thousand years of darkness. He claims that the Renaissance was in fact a period when thought declined significantly, bringing to an end a period of advance in the late Middle Ages, and that the twelfth century was the true renaissance. For example, the rediscovery of classical knowledge, which the later Italian humanists claimed for themselves, was actually accomplished in the twelfth century. "Something of the general continuity in

[113] Robert Briffault, Making of Humanity (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1928), 188-191. In support see, S.D. Goitein, "Between Hellenism and Renaissance—Islam, the Intermediate Civilization," *Islamic Studies* 2 (1963): 217-233; and C. Burnett and A. Contadini, eds., *Islam and the Italian Renaissance* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1999).

[114] James Franklin, "The Renaissance Myth," *Quadrant* 26/11 (Nov. 1982): 51-60.

philosophic thought is shown in the fact that the favorite book of Descartes, which he carried in all his travels, was Aquinas' *Summa.*"[115]

The philosopher and historian Robert Pasnau makes a similar claim that modernity came in the late twelfth century, with Averroes' revival of Aristotle and its almost immediate embrace by the Latin West.[116] He believes the concerns of scholastic philosophy are largely continuous with the central themes of the modern era, that early modern philosophy, though different in tone and style, is a natural progression out of later medieval debates, and that a grasp of the scholastic background is essential to an understanding of the philosophy of Descartes, Locke, and others. "The men of the later Middle Ages studied a substantial number of Greek authors, pagan as well as Christian. Directly or indirectly they learnt a great deal about the Greek past. They laid the foundations without which the Renaissance could not have flourished."[117]

Another view has been recently proposed by Arun Bala, in his history of the birth of modern science. Bala argues that the changes involved in the Scientific Revolution have to be seen as rooted within the multicultural influences on Europe. Bala argues that by ignoring such multicultural impacts we have been led to a

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[115] Artz, *The Mind of the Middle Ages,* 269e.

[116] See Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997). In support of this general thesis, see also, Thomas Arnold and Alfred Guillaume, eds., *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931); Christopher Dawson, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937); and Stanwood Cobb, *Islamic Contributions to Civilization* (Washington, D.C.: Avalon Press, 1963).

[117] Bolgar, "The Greek Legacy," in *The Greek Legacy: A New Appraisal,* ed. Finley, 451.

Eurocentric conception of the Scientific Revolution.[118] Fletcher, in agreement, states, "Modern science begins in thirteenth-century Europe, based firmly on the plinth furnished by translations from Arabic and Greek. In this perspective the European scientific and industrial revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries appear less as new beginnings than as the end of a long haul."[119]

While I do not agree to the lengths at which the continuity theorists downplay the creative work of the Italian Renaissance, I do agree with their uplifting of the creative work done in the twelfth century in response to and in light of the Arabic translation work done in Spain of Greek philosophical treatises. I also affirm the idea of the general continuity and conservation/interpretation of human thought throughout the Middle Age period that lies at the heart of the continuity theorists construct. As the scope of Arabic sponsored work infiltrated Western Europe, so too with it came a renewed sense of how to understand and investigate the world. "With interest came method: a rationalistic habit of mind and an experimental temper . . . kept alive in the Mohammedan countries, and . . . passed to Western Christendom."[120] Hugh Bibbs summarizes,

> The subtle shift away from rationalism and scholasticism towards empiricism and experiment had by no means become obvious by the end of the Medieval period. Traditionalists still held sway. However, the great influence of the Arab literature remained. The Christian world had changed in light of the Muslim world, and the new learning offered possibilities where the old

[118] Arun Bala, *The Dialogue of Civilizations in the Birth of Modern Science* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[119] Fletcher, *Moorish Spain,* 153.

[120] Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century,* 302.

> learning failed. Indeed, the old learning had failed, so there was no way of recovering the mentality of the tenth century. After contact with the Arabs, the Later Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution were perhaps inevitable in Europe.[121]

It is interesting, as it is unfortunate, that as the Renaissance progressed, the appreciation for Arabic roots faded. As Christianity and Islam grew further apart geographically, their shared cultural streams dried up as well. For example, the Italian scholar, Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), who was himself well-versed in Arabic, says in one of his works, "Leave to us in Heaven's name Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, and keep your Omar, your Alchabitius, your Abenzoar, your Abenragel."[122] While in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there had been professors of Arabic in several European universities, when a student asked about instruction in Arabic in Salamanca, he was told, "What concern have you with this barbaric language, Arabic?"[123] As I will conclude in my final chapter, the beginnings of Western ignorance and repression of Islamic philosophical ties begins with these kinds of culturally-biased assumptions that divided East and West.

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[121] Hugh Bibbs, "The Islamic Foundation of the Renaissance," Scriptorium Series: Volume 3, 1999, <http://www.medievalhistory.net/islamica.htm>, accessed September 2, 2007.

[122] Quoted by Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* 80.

[123] Ibid.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 The Greek Path to Europe

The philosophical journey from ancient Greece, and before, to the beginning of the European Renaissance period is now complete. What my research has attempted to add to the intellectual dialogue of Western educational foundations has been a tracing of the varied avenues that classical Greek thought has taken, both through text and context, in route to our present discussion forums. I have taken a synthetic, analytical approach to the study of the twin philosophical giants, Plato and Aristotle, through whom Western thought has derived its compass bearings.[1] We have observed how the broad ideas of these two men have come into focus, through the flexible assimilation from earlier cultures, the creative genius of early Greek thinkers, and the sheer personal resources of Plato and Aristotle themselves. As their individual conclusions became general systems of thought, we have seen their influence wash through the Greek and Roman empires, finding capable interpreters in every century who propelled their ideas ahead to the next generation.

[1] "The involvement of Greek philosophy in the Western philosophical tradition is not measured merely by the fact that ancient philosophy originated so many fields of inquiry which continue to the present day. It emerges also in the fact that in each age philosophers have looked back to ancient philosophy—overwhelmingly, of course, to Plato and Aristotle—in order to give authority to their own work, or to contrast it, or by reinterpretation of the classical philosophers to come to understand them, and themselves, in different ways. The Greek philosophers have been not just the fathers, but the *companions*, of Western philosophy" [emphasis mine], Williams "Philosophy," in *The Greek Legacy: A New Appraisal,* ed. Finley, 208.

As we approached the history-shattering splintering of the old Roman Empire into its West and East partitions, the fate of Greek philosophy followed the contours of the emerging geopolitical realities, and, first in the West, then in the East, these philosophical priorities fell into disuse. The West, overrun by Teutonic barbarians, lost its hold on the Greeks and on education in general as it moved from culture to crisis. The East, dominated by the hierarchical regime of Christian Byzantium, found in the Greek classics a dangerous undertow to their theological presuppositions and the intellectual climate moved largely into stagnation. The line of Greek philosophical continuity found itself jeopardized by this double dead-end.

Without precedent, a desert nomadic culture from the southeast margins of the Mediterranean world emerged in the seventh century to fill the power vacuum left from the demise of the Rome-based, multi-century empire of the Caesars. The religion of Islam appeared out of the sands of Arabia, overrunning first the remnants of the old Persian territories of Mesopotamia and then the former Hellenized colonies of the eastern Mediterranean. Within a century, a mere heartbeat in human history, the Muslim crusaders marched across the northern shores of Africa and established a western base of operations on the Iberian peninsula. This culture, tied together by a common deity, proclamation, and tongue, assimilated the civilizations it captured, including, most notably for this research, the key works and ideas of the Greek thinkers. Through a series of translators, the marginalized Greek philosophers were moved within the heart of the Arabic tradition. There they survived and reproduced, in the hands of capable scholars who spoke Arabic, not Greek.

This work of Arabic scholars "demonstrated for the first time in history that scientific and philosophical thought are international, not bound to a specific language or culture."[2] Once the Arabic culture forged by early Abbasid society established the universality of Greek thought, it provided an accessible and proven model for the Latin West to adopt and within which to invest, showing that faith and reason could be married.

These Arabic-infused treatises moved steadily into the western Islamic centers in al-Andulas, where they received their final Arabic treatment, through the work of Averroes. From Spain, the Latin West, just recently opening its mind's door to broader streams of thought, drank deeply from the translated Greek works and commentaries that surrounded them. The ensuing twelfth-century revival allowed Plato and especially Aristotle to find a new group of interested and inquiring individuals to read and respond to these Greek ideas. Through the auspicious work of Christian scholars like Thomas Aquinas, Greek thought was regenerated within the Christian tradition and allowed to sprout new growth within the gates of Europe's blossoming universities. From here, the Greek ideas were ready at hand for the humanistic explosion of renaissance thought that occurred between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus, Plato and Aristotle arrived from their long and, at times, perilous passage to find a secure home with Western philosophical/educational thought and to mold its entire culture from the bottom up.[3]

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[2] Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture,* 192.

[3] See Appendix J, which summarizes the basic theme of my research in a succinct format.

The key to this dissertation has been the emphasis laid upon the often ignored role that the Islamic Empire played in transmitting, translating, and transforming Greek philosophy in such a way as to make it available for adoption by Europe in the high Middle Ages. It is clear that,

> . . . what the Arabs transmitted to the West went far beyond the Greek legacy. For it was the Arabs from whom Europe also learned that there can be no exclusiveness in man's quest for truth, and that truth itself knows no frontiers of race or religion. These were in fact the principles that were to guide the Renaissance and make Western progress and Western civilization possible.[4]

The priority of this research has been to demonstrate that Western philosophy has Eastern ancestors, a fact hardly acknowledged in the history of our cultural development but one that has immense ramifications for a proper understanding of what it means to participate in the Western intellectual tradition.

Finley states the natural conclusion to my thesis, and its significant implications, well:

> The diffusion of ideas and institutions—legacy is one form of diffusion, in time rather than in space—is never a mechanical copying merely for the sake of copying. Legacy implies values; it is always selective, that is to say, there is also rejection, non-legacy, and there is unending adaptation, modification, distortion . . . The institutional and social framework of European civilization changed fundamentally, not once but several times, in the more than two thousand years since the end of classical Hellas. Hence there was no institutional legacy in any meaningful sense, despite occasional futile pleas for turning back the clock, and even more common illegitimate claims of ancient authority for institutions and institutional changes . . . But there was a very substantial, genuine cultural legacy—that is a commonplace—and the complexity of fitting that into a succession of different environments is perhaps the most interesting, and most difficult, aspect of all.[5]

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[4] Rom Landau, *The Arab Heritage of Western Civilization* (New York: Arab Information Center, 1962), 10.

[5] Finley, "Introduction," in *The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal*, 21.

7.2 The Myth of Westerness

My research has opened a door through which Western thought can reexamine itself from the vantage point of wider understanding of its own cultural integrity. It is no secret that historical reviews of one's own background and identity always fall prey to subjectivity in spite of pretensions to maintain an objective status. History is typically written by the "victors" and usually serves to ratify and commend the current state of affairs. The writing of history is preoccupied with the myths of our intellectual heredity and tells those kinds of stories we want to hear, that affirm our place in the history of civilization. Such a predisposition colors the kind of information we process and governs the hypotheses we find tenable. This image determines what facts we include in our histories and what priority we give the various streams that make up our story.

According to Maria Menocal, the most pervasive construct we have of ourselves and our culture is one that can be subsumed under the descriptor "Western." "Whether it is spoken or unspoken, named or unnamed, we are governed by the notion that there is a distinctive cultural history that can be characterized as Western, and that it is in distinctive, necessary, and fundamental opposition to non-Western culture."[6] With this Western bias comes a natural corollary: a tacit presupposition of the superiority of West over East. As Southern notes, this is not a new problem: "The Western sense of superiority in every sphere of endeavor has scarcely been challenged for three hundred years. It has become part of our heritage, most painful to

[6] Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*, 1.

abandon or adjust."[7] When we examine the medieval period of intellectual development, however, if we are honest, we see actually a very different, almost reverse picture. I have offered evidence that for the greater period of the Middle Ages, it was not the West but the eastern Islamic Empire which played the role of the ascendant and dominant culture, while the West languished in self-absorbed mediocrity. The resistance to the proper acknowledgement of the fundamental characteristics of our intellectual genealogy is deep-seated. "The tenor of some of the responses to the suggestion that this Arab-centered vision might be a more viable historical reconstruction for the West has occasionally been reminiscent of the reactions once provoked by Darwin's suggestion (for so was the theory of evolution construed) that we were 'descended from monkeys.'"[8] This same thought is continued here:

> Notwithstanding the substantial influence that it has had on western philosophy, medieval Islamic philosophy is not generally regarded as part of the philosophical canon in the English-speaking world, and such figures as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) remain obscure by comparison with Augustine and Aquinas. More often than not, they are either considered curiosities deriving from an entirely different philosophical tradition, or preservers of and commentators on the Greek philosophical heritage without a sufficiently original contribution of their own. The reasons for these omissions and for the disparagement of Islamic philosophy are steeped in the often conflicted history of Islam and Christendom.[9]

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[7] Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages,* 2.

[8] Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*, 3.

[9] Muhammad ali Khalidi, ed., "Introduction," *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xi.

Islam appeared to be barbaric and backward but it could not be denied that it had the ability to advance and to maintain stability—and it would not go away. Southern adds to this analysis by offering insight into the fundamental Christian-Islam question:

> The existence of Islam was the most far-reaching problem in medieval Christendom. It was a problem at every level of experience. As a practical problem it called for action and for discrimination between the competing possibilities of Crusade, conversion, coexistence, and commercial interchange. As a theological problem it called persistently for some answer to the mystery of its existence, . . . was it . . . a heresy, a schism, or a new religion; a work of man or devil; an obscene parody of Christianity, or a system of thought that deserved to be treated with respect? It was difficult to decide among the possibilities. But before deciding it was necessary to know the facts, and these were not easy to know. So there arose a historical problem that could not be solved, could scarcely be approached, without linguistic and literary knowledge difficult to acquire, and made more difficult by secrecy, prejudice, and the strong desire not to know for fear of contamination.[10]

By way of example of this kind of Westernized view of history, Catholic scholars would describe the role of Arabic philosophy in Western thought as severely overrated. Here is a clear sampling of such a perspective:

> The Arabians contributed in a very large degree to making Aristotle known in Christian Europe; however, in doing this, they were but transmitting what they themselves had received from Christian sources; and, moreover, the Aristotle who finally gained recognition in Christian Europe was not the Arabian Aristotle, but the Greek Aristotle, who came to Western Europe by way of Constantinople.[11]

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[10] Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages,* 3.

[11] William Turner, "The Arabian School of Philosophy," the New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01674c.htm>, accessed May 6, 2006. A fundamental critique of the western "Orientalist" approach to Islam (Orientalists say Islam merely copied ancient ways) is presented by Edward W. Said in his *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

The concept that there are paradigms that govern periods of scholarship and that these paradigms undergo periodic revision is well known, especially since the work of Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.[12] The paradigm that has greatly shaped our understanding of the Middle Ages and of the development of a Western mindset was partially formulated during the period immediately following the medieval period, when it was thought that a true "rebirth" had occurred after a long interval of cultural darkness. The Renaissance mind was loath to attach any continuity to the Middle Ages and instead fostered the view that the now modern world was directly connected to the classical world. The medieval contribution to this heritage was not considered worthy of incorporation into the intellectual family tree.

Noted deconstructionist, Stanley Fish, reminds us of a first key principle of hermeneutics:

> I argue that whatever account we have of a work or a period or of the entire canon is an account that is possible or intelligible only within the assumptions embodied in current professional practice. Rather than standing independently of our efforts, works, periods, and canons have the shape they do precisely because of our efforts, and therefore no act of literary criticism, no matter how minimally "descriptive" can be said to "bypass" the network that enables it.[13]

The remainder of this paradigm was manifested in the imperial and colonial experiences of the emerging modern Europe, which helped sharpen the perception of Western superiority as well as its inherent differences between it and the rest of

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[12] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), perhaps the single most significant book I encountered during my doctoral program at the University of Kansas.

[13] Stanley Fish, "Profession Despise Thyself: Fear and Self-Loathing in Literary Studies," *Critical Inquiry* 10.2 (1983): 357.

global society. Europe was the sole entity that was capable of bringing light to an otherwise darkened world. Civilization resided exclusively in the West, and had always been latent there as direct heirs of the first civilization of the Greeks.

So to include the cluttered history of the Middle Ages into the grand product of Western Europe in any meaningful way offered more problems than benefits. And to propose that there might be an Arab-Islamic component to this Western environment was unbearable. That an alien, Semitic culture could have important contributions to the cultural ideology of the privileged West seemed to be the ultimate oxymoron.

> The proposition that the Arab world played a critical role in the making of the modern West . . . is in clear and flagrant contradiction of cultural ideology. It is unimaginable in the context of the readily observable phenomenon that was institutionalized as an essential element of European ideology and that has remained so in many instances to this day: cultural supremacy over the Arab world.[14]

During the time when medieval studies were in their heyday, the image of the Arab world was severely limiting; even in an earlier period it was hard to imagine that the Arab culture could have anything more than a marginal element in Western development. So it is no surprise that our current view of the connection between classical Greek philosophy and modern Western thought essentially bypasses the central role of Arabic scholars to this process during the Middle Ages; "the key to the unimaginability of this particular bit of revisionism is that it would have challenged

[14] Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval History,* 6. The roots of this alien feeling toward Islam can be traced back to medieval images of the Arabs. The four chief points of the medieval picture of Islam included: the Islam religion was a falsehood and perversion of the truth; it was a religion of violence and the sword; it was a religion of self-indulgence; and finally, Muhammad was the antichrist. See Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*, 73.

and ultimately belied the regnant worldview, requiring the reversal of an ideologically conditioned sense of the communal Western self."[15] This kind of reassessment requires the ability and, more importantly, the desire to acknowledge a degree of indebtedness to a culture generally regarded as inferior and perhaps the epitome of "otherness."

The Arabic component of the Western philosophical stance has remained incidental in most treatments of the subject. In spite of isolated recognition of this component in modern studies, "such perspectives have never become part of the mainstream within the community of scholars who regularly deal with medieval European studies . . . the question of the effect of the Arab sojourn in Spain is hardly a matter of vital importance to most medievalists."[16] The Semitic languages of Hebrew and Arabic are not known resources among most modern scholars. There is no cry to add to required reading lists the names of Avicenna or Averroes. "Because Europe was reacting against Islam it belittled the influence of the Saracens and exaggerated its dependence on its Greek and Roman heritage. So today an important task for western Europeans, as we move into the era of "one world," is to correct this

[15] Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval History,* 9. "Western Christendom and Islam not only represented two distinct systems of religion; they were societies extraordinarily unlike from almost every point of view. For the greater part of the Middle Ages and over most of its area, the West formed a society primarily agrarian, feudal, and monastic, at a time when the strength of Islam lay in its great cities, wealthy courts, and long lines of communication. To Western ideals essentially celibate, sacerdotal, and hierarchical, Islam . . . enjoy[ed] a remarkable freedom of speculation, with no priests and no monasteries built into the basic structure of society as they were in the West,. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages,* 7.

[16] Ibid., 10, 11.

false emphasis and to acknowledge fully our debt to the Arab and Islamic world."[17] Southern adds, "We have reached a point in the study of medieval history at which it is very important that attention should be directed to communities outside western Europe, and especially to those that exercised an influence on the development of the West."[18]

What I call for in this conclusion is a willingness to resist the temptation to de-historicize or devalue what actually occurred in the historical development of Western thought. In order to understand current Western constructs, we are obligated to investigate the pathways that enabled those constructs to be established. "It seems only logical that . . . we should more closely and explicitly reevaluate our assumptions and knowledge of the often-hidden Other—the Arab, the Semite, the Averroes—who stands silently behind Aristotle in the thirteenth century."[19] Without these other voices, our Western views are impoverished and less than truthful and suffers from a self-induced psychosis of cultural xenophobia. Without these other views, we delimit what it means to be fully human within a global context. "My own conviction is that the men of the East are not essentially different from those of the West. In every country one finds the whole gamut of men . . . Civilization is not Eastern or Western. It is not located in Washington any more than in Baghdad. It can

[17] Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* 84.

[18] Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, 1.

[19] Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval History*, 14.

exist only wherever and whenever there are good men and good women who understand it, who know how to use it, and do not abuse it."[20]

I stated in the introduction to this dissertation that my work would be moderately revisionist in scope. I still maintain that posture. Revisionism is never popular; it involves the "murder" of cherished ideas and ideologies. But in this case, I am not presenting a full revisionist history of Western philosophy. I am recommending that in addition to the canon of texts we value in the West, we add to it, not necessarily delete from it. My research has shown that our Western intellectual tradition must allow previously so-called alien forces to be owned as part of our own tradition. The ancestry of the West is mixed and colorful. It is diverse and broad. It is multicultural and multiethnic. It is inclusive not reclusive or exclusive. "All cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic."[21] We cannot afford to allow ourselves to languish in the stupor of cultural amnesia.

The next logical step implied by this research is not only to fully embrace our past, but to use our historical foundations from which to build our path for future intellectual development. Philosophy and education are dynamic activities that must capture the imagination of each successive generation to such an extent that they become living entities and not simply repeated mantras relevant to past eras. The Greek philosophers and philosophies will remain a starting point for these future

[20] Sarton, *The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East,* 45.

[21] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), xxv.

concerns, but they cannot remain static museum pieces to be studied but not to be lived. Philosophical constructs always call for interpretation based in the current cultural environment and with a true representation of existing presuppositions. It has been true, and will continue to be true that, "for every generation Greece wore a different face, and there is no reason to suppose that we have come to the end of its potential metamorphoses."[22] The active, creative involvement of the current intellectual community is the key to a thriving civilization; and a thriving civilization is no guarantee, as we have seen in various periods of history along our research path. When critical thinking ceases, society dies. Sarton makes the interesting observation, "Civilization is *not* a disease which can be cured; it is a struggle which must be fought over and over again. It is never secure. Our freedom, our knowledge, all the blessings of our lives, are ours only on probation. We must continue to deserve them or else we shall lose them. If we relax, we slide down. The struggle against injustice, error, ugliness, poverty is endless."[23]

7.3 Directions for Further Research

As this study comes to a conclusion, let me offer, in the form of simple brief statements, where this research might profitably continue and where questions or issues that have only tangentially been touched might find a fuller arena of discussion.

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[22] Bolgar, "The Greek Legacy," in *The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal,* ed. Finley, 471.

[23] Sarton, *The Incubation of Western Culture in the Middle East,* 43.

- The study and reading of classic Greek philosophy today must be immersed in the full historical and cultural context of it precursors, both early Greek and especially non-Greek, as well as its history of transmission into modern times, including Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Latin, and Jewish personalities. A better recognition of the multicultural crosscurrents inherent in Western thought is mandatory for future work in philosophy of education. What would it mean for us to fully understand that "the roots of Western thought are a mixture of Greco-Arabic and Hebrew thought"?[24]
- More attention should be given to the role of Spain in Western studies, and its influence as the leading fertile intellectual area of pre-Renaissance Europe deserves considerable attention.
- The history of Islam, its religion and empire, should find a fuller emphasis in Western texts and, without exaggeration, be put on a similar status to that of the Roman Empire period.
- Adding encouragement for students to study the Semitic languages of Arabic and Hebrew will assist future studies in the background of Western thought.
- I have only mentioned in passing the complex system of Islamic education during its reign in the Middle Ages. More directed research about

[24] Myers, *Arabic Thought and the Western World,* 134. For example, Semitic philosophy, with its natural emphasis on story, passion, and faith brings a healthy counterbalance to the Greek tendency toward reason, logic, and systemization.

educational constructs in the Middle East and their bearing on later Western education would find a bountiful array of insights.

- Philosophy of education courses and curriculum must find more intentional ways to connect Western philosophical/educational history, from ancient Greece to Renaissance Europe, in more appropriate and authentic terms, filling the "hole in history" that I have pointed to in this study.
- The direct and meaningful inclusion of Arabic philosophers should be common in future Philosophy of Education textbooks, with adequate exposure and inclusion of their works within the so-called Western canon of literature. This would include especially Arab thinkers from the Middle Ages but would not preclude modern Arab thought.
- Perhaps most importantly, a purposeful and ongoing dialogue between East and West must become routine in our modern intellectual discourse. Educators and philosophers can lead the way in this search for common ground and mutual respect as we grow irresistibly into a global community.[25]

[25] See, for example, Sadra Islamic Philosophy Research Institute, *Islam-West Philosophical Dialogue,* papers presented at the World Congress on Mulla Sadra , vol.1 (Tehran: Mulla Sadra and Transcendent Philosophy, 2001).

7.4 Hesperos is Phosphoros

As the sun sets, the jewel of the sky, the evening star shines brightly above the western horizon. As it has since humans first gazed into the heavens, the evening star meekly points to the obvious fact that its giant cousin, the life-giving sun, has departed for yet another day. But in its own unique brilliance, the evening star sends a message of hope that the light slipping away in the West will return to bathe the earth again with its radiance. The Greeks gave the evening star the name of one of their gods: Hesperos. Later, the Romans renamed all of the Greek gods and Hesperos became Vesper in Latin, a word we know in English associated with the time of evening. In both of these words, with a simple phonetic substitution of the first letters from an H or V to a W, we see the etymological linkage to our English word "west." The West is where the evening star lives.[26]

As the Greeks looked at the evening star, toward the West, they thought about the lands that lay in that direction from their homeland; lands that today bear the names of Italy and Spain. These lands the Greeks sometimes referred to simply as Hesperia, the "evening land" or "western land."

[26] All modern maps use conventional directions and place "West" toward the left, with North to the top. Often world maps place the North and South American continents to the far left and Asia and Australia to the far right. This may sound obvious but the fact is this: our maps are subjectively determined. No cartographical rule demands that West be on the left of our maps, it is simply a matter of convention. In fact many ancient maps placed North to the left, called T-O maps, showing the world with East at the top surrounded by a circular ocean (the letter 0), the three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa, being separated by the arms of the T, representing the Mediterranean, the river Nile to the South and the river Don flowing into the Black Sea to the North. The Egyptians even placed East to the left, orienting their maps to the flow of the Nile river. See Peter Whitfield's interesting discussion on map orientations and cultural perspectives in his *The Image of the World* (San Francisco: Pomegranate Art Books, 1994).

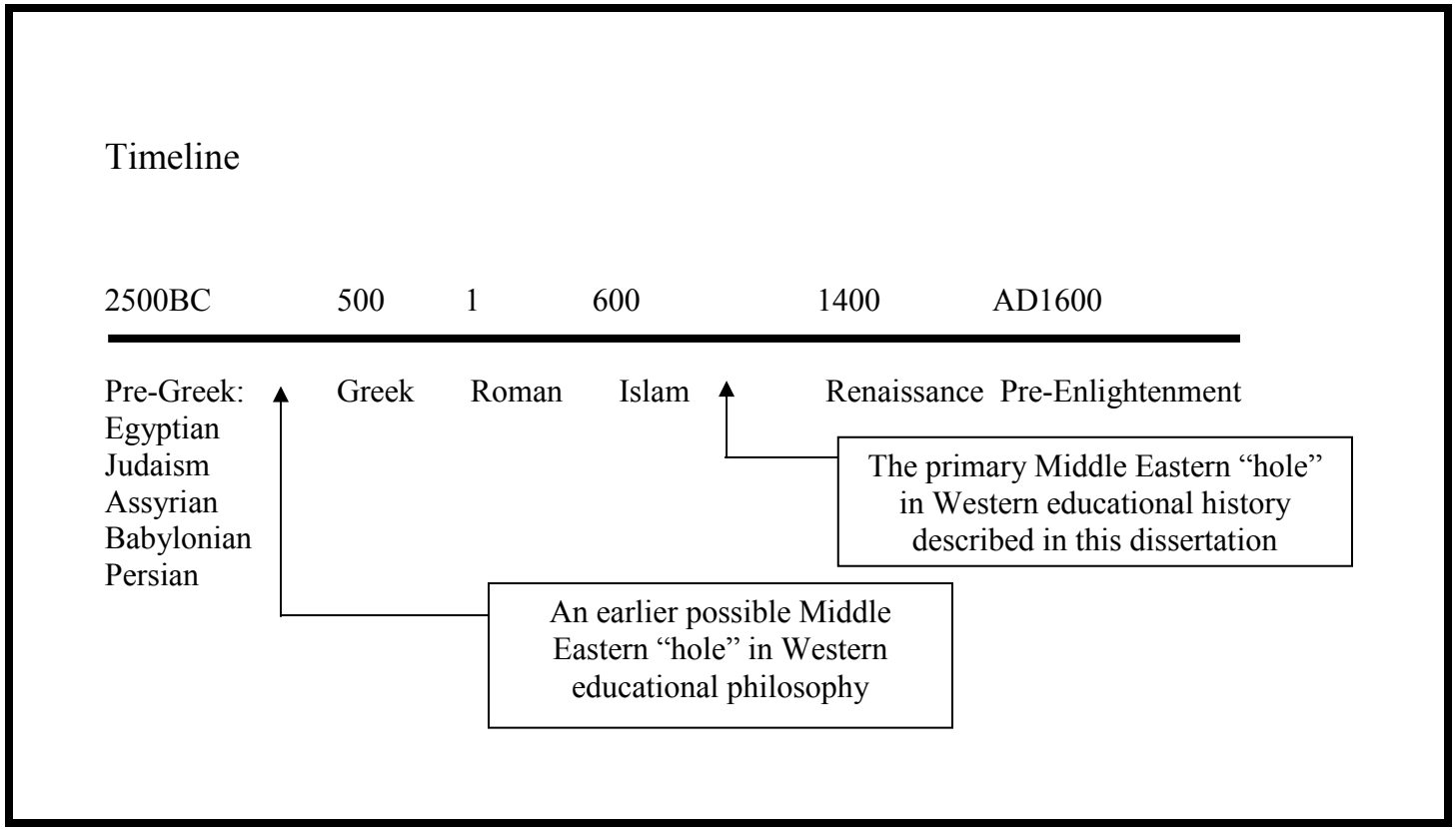
When the Greeks looked to the East in the pre-dawn hours, they would see the "the morning star," which they named Phosphoros, literally, the "torchbearer," again recognizing its role in announcing the soon rising of the sun. As they gazed eastward, the lands that lay in that direction filled their minds, lands that today bear the names of Iraq and Iran.

In the earliest days of Greek civilization, the evening star in the West, Hesporos, and the morning star in the East, Phosphoros, were thought to be two entirely separate bodies, separated by the widest of heavenly measures. But Pythagoras, in the sixth century B.C., was the first to make the amazing discovery—that the morning and evening stars were the same "star," both were actually the planet Venus! The East and West stars were not separate entities at all; they were, in fact, inseparable.

The sentence, "Hesperus is Phosphorus," has been used to indicate the correspondence of two items initially considered different or foreign from each other. Gottlob Frege used this paradox to illustrate his idea of sense and reference. Saul Kripke used the sentence to demonstrate that the knowledge of something necessary (in this case an identity) is not always an *a priori* matter, but could (and in some cases, necessarily) be something *a posteriori,* discoverable by the senses.

In the context of this dissertation, I will conclude with this same strangely sounding truth: "Hesperus is Phosphorus," West is East. Western philosophical/ educational foundations are not alien to Eastern, at least Middle Eastern, ways of thinking, historically speaking. The truth is, they are inseparable.

Appendix A:
The Philosophical/Educational "Hole in History" in the Western Intellectual Tradition



Appendix B:
Averroes in "The School of Athens"

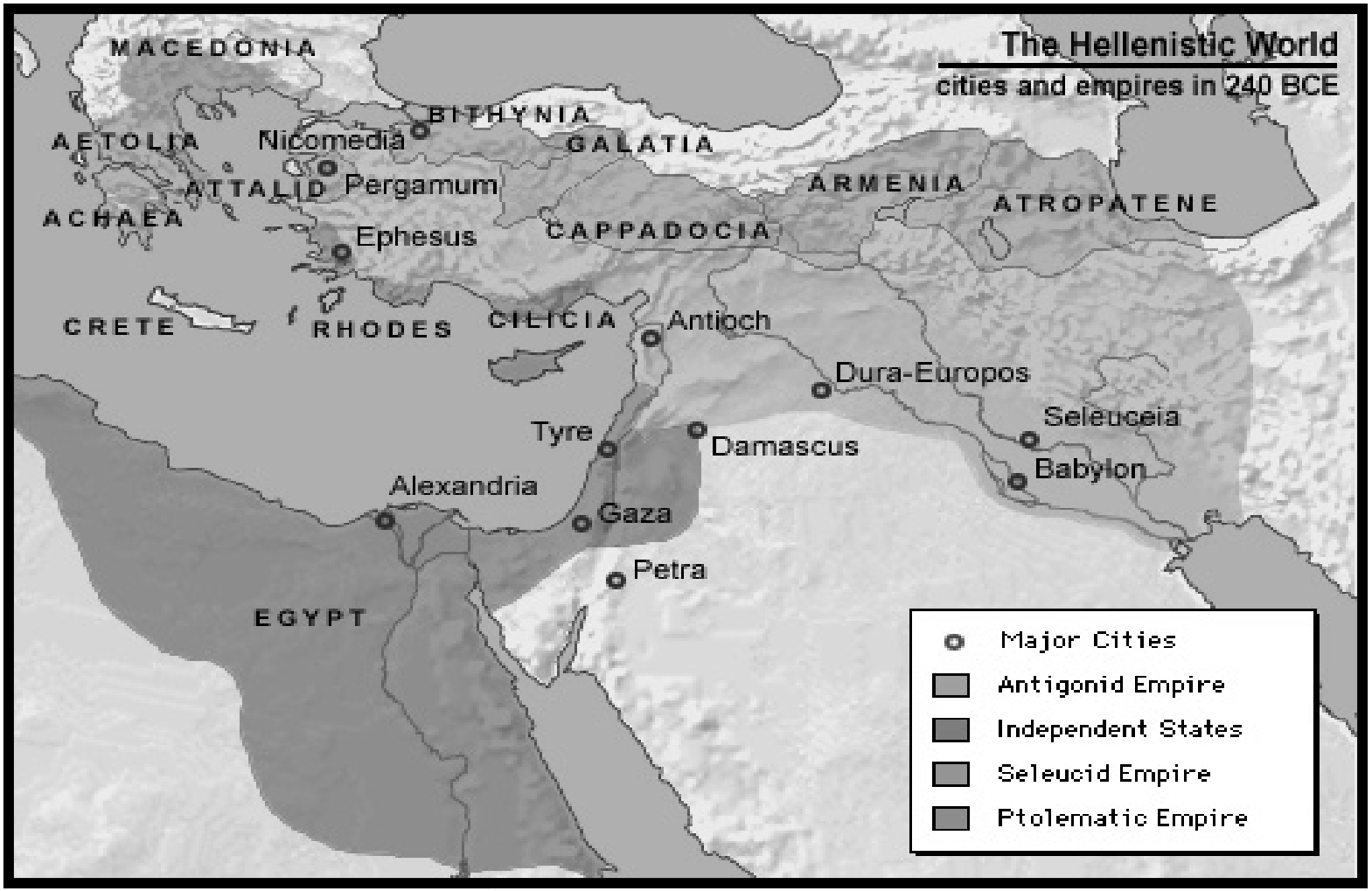
The School of Athens

(1509-1510)
by Raphael

Averroes

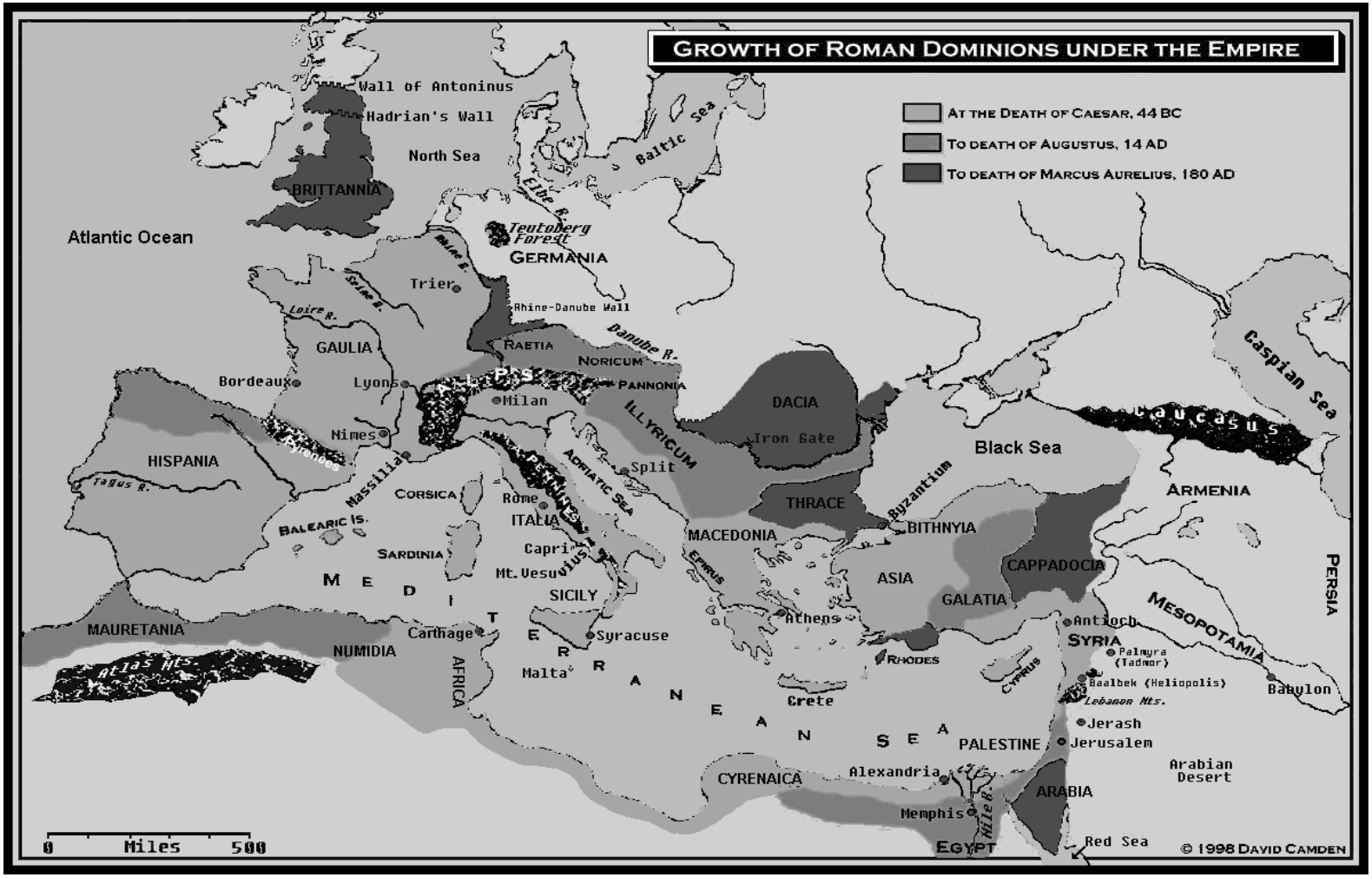
http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/x-Schede/SDRs/SDRs_03_02_020.html

Appendix C:
The Hellenistic World



http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~atlas/europe/static/map09.html

Appendix D:
The Extent of the Roman Empire



http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/corinthians/maps/empiregray.gif

Appendix E:
Chart: Reason vs. Faith

The Range of Positions on the Issue of Reason versus Faith

1. **Reason is the *only* avenue to knowledge.** Logic is a tool for making sure that our thinking about the world around us is valid.

2. **Reason is the *main* avenue to knowledge,** with faith (in revelations) reserved for non-philosophers. Theology is the handmaiden of philosophy. Logic is the key to gaining demonstrative (scientific) knowledge about the universe.

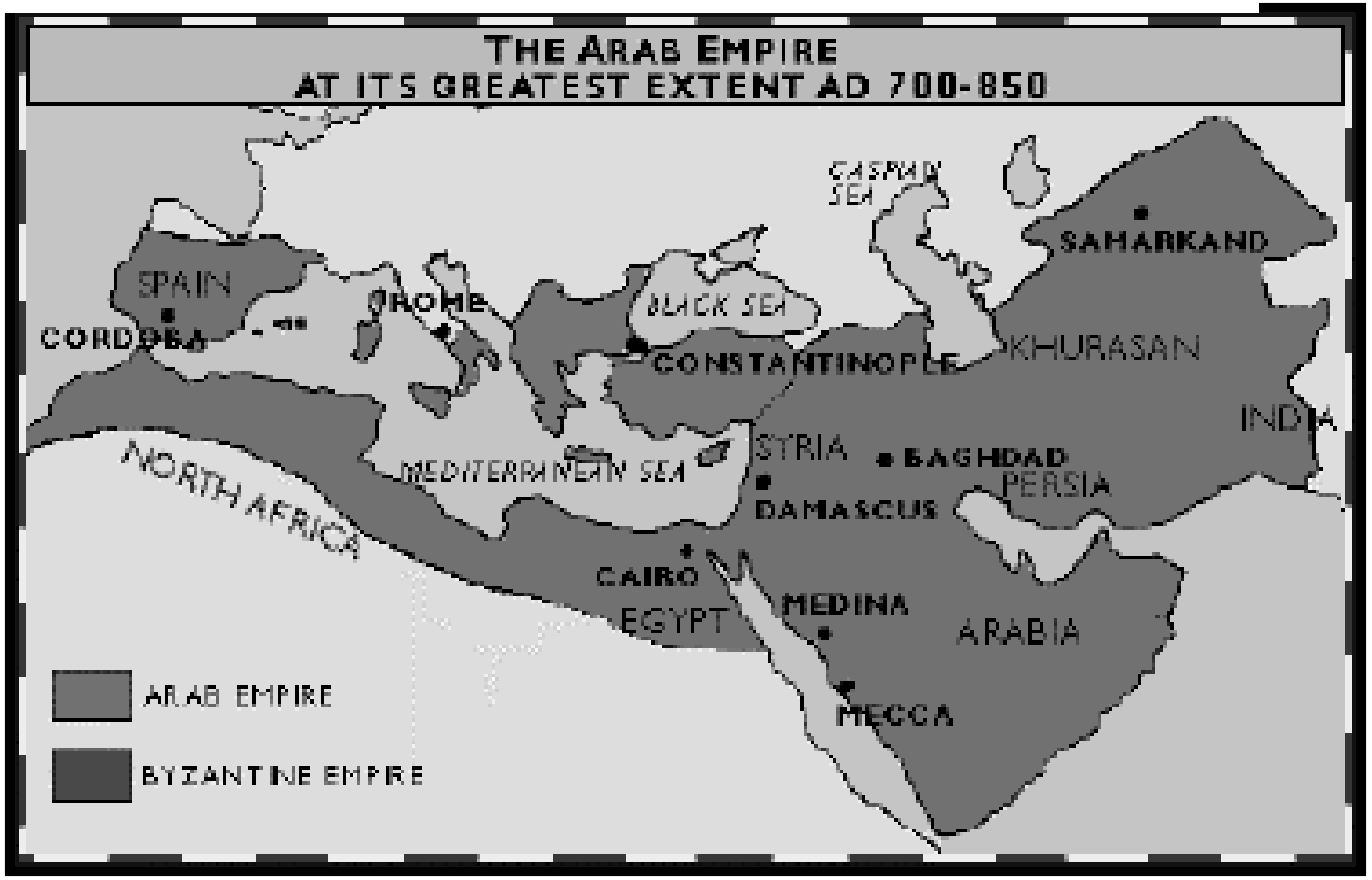
3. **Reason and faith are *equal* in validity,** each in its own domain (the "sensible" and the "intelligible" worlds.) Logic is useful for placing our beliefs in a tidy order.

4. **Faith is the *main* avenue to knowledge** about important issues (God and ethics, for example), with reason reserved for learning about "how" and "what" of everyday life.

5. **Faith is the *only* avenue to knowledge:** a faithfully accepted revelation may come from outside (a burning bush, for example) or from inside (mystical insights, for example). Logic is unnecessary at best, a threat at worst.[1]

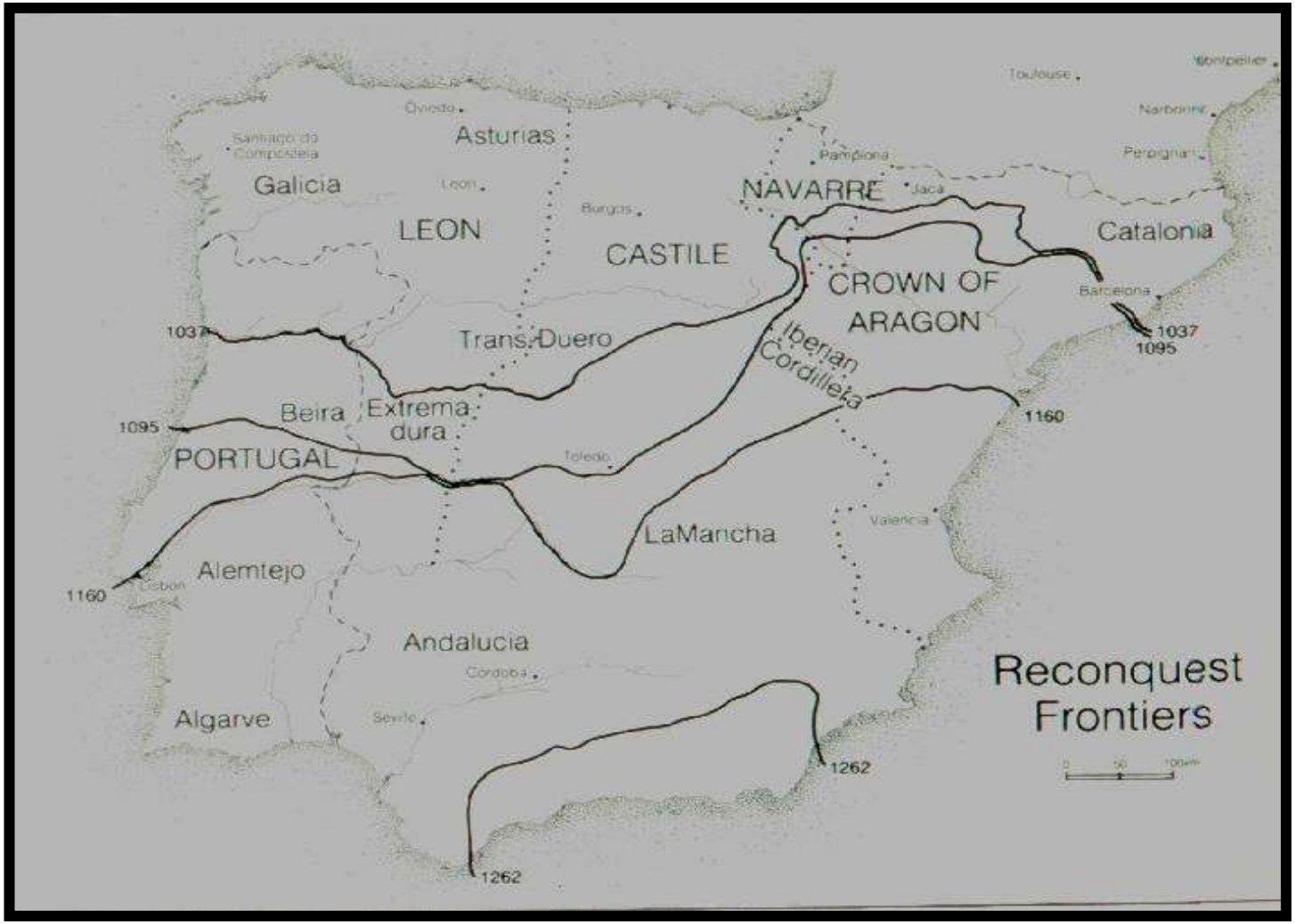
[1] Adapted from Laughlin, *The Aristotle Adventure,* 116.

Appendix F:
The Extent of the Islamic Empire



http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/I_Transp/IO6_Shia.html

Appendix G:
The Re-conquest of Spain



http://libro.uca.edu/socwar/map1.jpg

Appendix H:
Arabic-Latin Translations

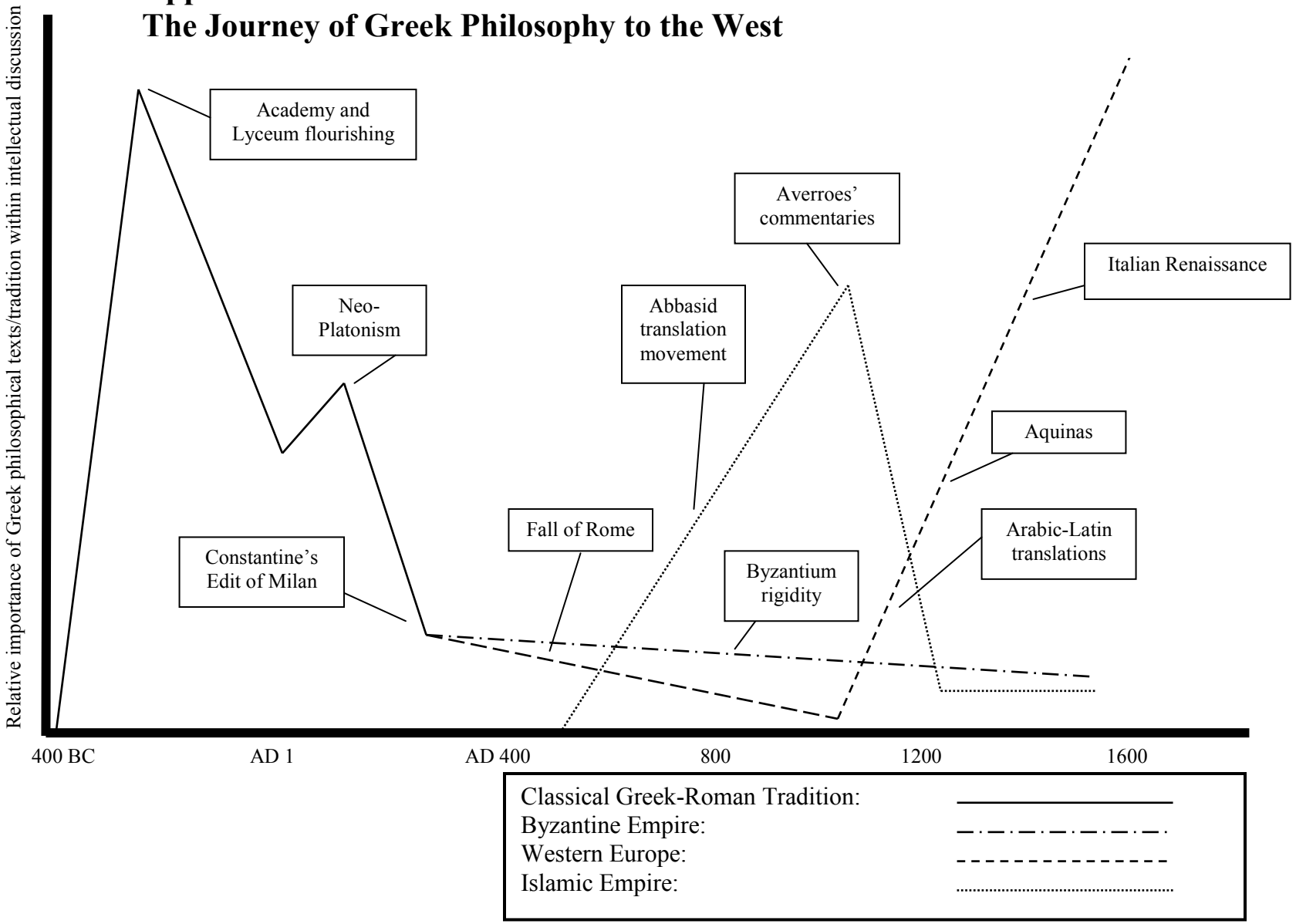
The following list highlights the major Arabic-Latin translators of the 12th -14th centuries. This list does not include the Arabic-Hebrew or Arabic-Spanish translators, which are important to the movement of Greek thought into Europe, but who lie tangentially to my dissertation.

Adelard of Bath	1116-1142; English, Christian
John of Seville	1126-1151; Spanish, Jew
Domingo Gundisalvo	1126-1151; Spanish, Christian
Herman the Dalmatian	1138-1145; Croatian, Christian
Hugh of Santalla	1119-1151; Spanish, Christian
Robert of Chester	1141-1150; English, Christian
Plato of Tivoli	1133-1150; Italian, Christian
Stephen of Antioch	c. 1128; Italian, Christian
Abraham Bar Hiyya	1133-1150; Spanish, Jew
Gerard of Cremona	1114-1187; Italian, Christian
Marc of Toledo	1190-1200; Spanish, Christian
Judah ibn Tibbon	1150-1180; Spanish, Jew
Alfred of Sareshel	c. 1200; English, Christian
Michael Scot	c. 1200-1235; Scotch, Christian
Steven of Saragossa	c. 1230; Spanish, Christian
Peter Gallego	c. 1230; Spanish, Christian
Salio of Padua	c. 1240; Spanish, Christian
William of Lunis	c. 1230; Italian, Christian
Philip of Tripoli	c. 1233; Syrian, Christian
Arnold of Villanova	c. 1260; Italian, Christian
Giovanni Campanus	c. 1260; Italian, Christian
Robert the Englishman	c. 1270; English, Christian
John of Brescia	c. 1263; Italian, Christian
Armenguad, Son of Blaise	c. 1290; French, Christian
Herman the German	c 1250; German, Christian
Moses of Palermo	c 1250; Sicilian, Jew
Faraj ben Salim	13th century; Sicilian, Jew
Stephen, Son of Arnold	c. 1350, Spanish, Christian

Appendix I:
Pre-Renaissance Europe

http://www.euratlas.com/big/big1000.htm

Appendix J:
The Journey of Greek Philosophy to the West



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